Commentary

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Norman Podhoretz

On Not Being a Dove
John Updike

What Was T. S. Eliot?
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Books in Review
Edward N. Luttwak/David Singer/John J. DiIulio, Jr./
William McGurn/Daniel Seligman

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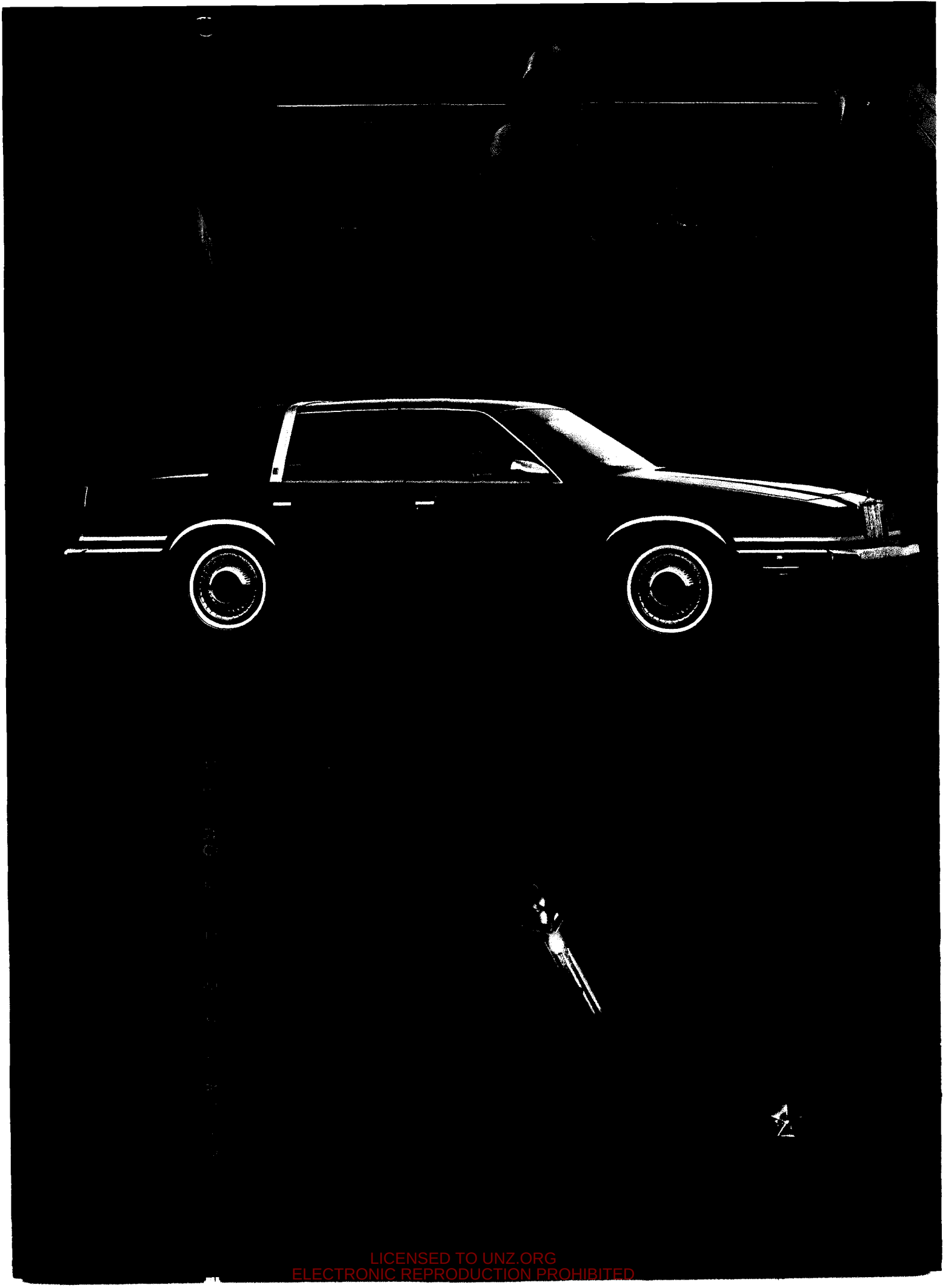

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Letters from Readers

The Soviet Threat

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . At some point in the course of Angelo M. Codevilla's article, "Is There Still a Soviet Threat?" [November 1988], I found myself wondering why, if things were so bad, the Finlandization of Western Europe had not already occurred. Various answers suggested themselves: (1) It is much more difficult to invade territory than to defend it, and therefore the Soviet Union does not yet possess so substantial an advantage as to be deemed a credible threat; (2) the troop reliability of Warsaw Pact forces is, to say the least, poor . . .; (3) notwithstanding Soviet civil-defense efforts and the reduced credibility of U.S. strategic arsenals in the wake of a conventional invasion, substantial damage to valued Soviet assets is credibly threatened by the British and French nuclear arsenals, should the Soviets overwhelm NATO troops; (4) the Soviets would rather engage in adventurism on the strategic periphery, thus maximizing their cost/benefit ratio, than confront NATO head on; (5) though some facts suggest an offensive Soviet posture, others might bear a different interpretation. For example, the forward deployment, and greater integration, of Warsaw Pact forces under Soviet command is very likely a way of guaranteeing that the Soviets retain control of their bloc, especially in a crisis, as much as anything else.

These are only the most obvious of the explanations for the fact that, notwithstanding superiority in materiel, Western Europe has not yet been "Finlandized," much less invaded. If these are among the "intangibles" to which Mr. Codevilla alludes with contempt, I am amazed that he shrugs them off. Clearly, they are as much a part of the strategic equation as materiel. . . .

In view of such considerations, it seems to me that our civil and military leaders are neither so stupid nor so unpatriotic as might be inferred from Mr. Codevilla's article. . . . I am, relatively speaking, a hard-liner, but I believe that shrill, tendentious articles like Mr. Codevilla's do more harm than good, by damaging the credibility of hard-line positions in a situation where many are all too eager to grasp the soft line. . . .

MICHAEL DAVID BLUME
Annapolis, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . I think Angelo M. Codevilla and many others err when they connect the Soviet Communist system *per se* with a military threat to the Western world. . . . It is not Communism but Russia itself, regardless of which political system happens to be in power, which is the threat. Mr. Codevilla says "a Soviet Union governed by traditional Russian conservatives . . . would be a pleasant problem to have." On the contrary, traditional conservative Russia was an expansionist, aggressive nation, always feeling about for opportunities to increase Russian power. The threat to us derives not from Communism but from Russian nationalism, though knee-jerk hostility toward Communism continues to blind many to this fact. . . .

I doubt that the Russians are capable of developing Western-style liberalism, . . . but even if they were, there would still be the old Russian insecurities to contend with. Nor should we forget that a liberalized society too can be dynamically and aggressively expansionistic. . . . Consider the fact that Britain's imperialistic expansion took place in an atmosphere of political liberalizing at home. Consider finally that the United States, always a Westernized liberal nation, fought aggressive wars with Mexico and Spain and expanded its influence worldwide while proclaiming liberal ideals.

Russia, the nation that Kipling called "the bear that walks like a man," is not going to be miraculously transformed by *glasnost* and *perestroika* into an innocuous teddy bear.

JOSEPH FORBES
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Angelo M. Codevilla accurately notes that the current period of neo-détente in this country masks the fact that there is still a Soviet threat in this world. . . .

Doubts about Soviet aggressive designs in Europe should have been dispelled by the discovery of a spy ring in Europe headed by U.S. Army Sergeant Clyde Conrad.

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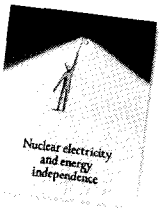

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This ring provided information on NATO nuclear-missile sites, communications, battle plans, supplies, and reserves. . . .

Though by itself the Conrad ring was not nearly as serious as the Walker spy ring, which provided Moscow with the ability to decipher millions of U.S. Navy messages, it was nonetheless a serious spy operation. It also strongly suggests the existence of other such rings all over NATO Europe. But even more important is that it shows that the Soviet Union takes invading Europe seriously. Why else would it want NATO battle plans and other such information? The Soviets know they may have to invade Europe someday and thus want to be able to win. . . .

The INF treaty has removed the one force in Europe, Pershing and Tomahawk missiles, that can guarantee the destruction, on short notice, of the second and third echelons of the Soviet army. It is these follow-on forces that are the real threat in any invasion of Europe, and Pershings and Tomahawk missiles were put in Europe precisely to hold them hostage, and thus be able more effectively to flesh out NATO's nuclear deterrent ability. Other systems are simply incapable of credibly threatening these forces. . . .

Thus the threat is real, and recent events have made it more ominous for the future. Whether we will act is unfortunately doubtful.

MICHAEL DALY
Wakefield, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . As Angelo M. Codevilla points out, the defense spending of the United States—in real terms—has been decreasing for the past four years at an alarming rate. Even more important, as Mr. Codevilla emphasizes, is the fact that U.S. capability vis-à-vis the USSR has been declining at an accelerated pace. Years ago we could get away with dismissing Soviet numerical superiority, content with the knowledge that the quality of our weapons was superior to the Soviets. But as Mr. Codevilla notes, this is no longer the case. . . .

The situation President Bush faces today is far more serious than the one President Reagan inherited from the Carter administration. In 1980 Reagan was elected partly on a promise to close the window of vulnerability—a situation in which the USSR could theoretically eliminate the land-based leg of the U.S. strategic-nuclear triad by expending only a relatively small fraction of its ICBM force. By holding most of its strategic forces in reserve, the USSR could then credibly deter the United States from launching a retaliatory strike by threatening to annihilate its population centers. What President would be crazy enough to order a retaliatory strike at the USSR knowing that he would be signing the death warrants of hundreds of millions of American civilians? Obviously, the side that gets the first strike in is the side that dictates the surrender terms of its opponent in the nuclear age. To make a long and dismal story short, the Reagan administration has done nothing to close the window of vulnerability. In fact, as Senator Sam Nunn has noted, the window has opened even wider during the Reagan administration. . . .

It should be noted that the window of vulnerability is not merely a fixation among right-wing ideologues. Democrats within the Carter administration were also deeply concerned about the growing exposure of U.S. strategic-nuclear assets to a Soviet first strike. This is precisely why Carter decided to deploy 200 MX missiles on an enormous racetrack in the Nevada and Utah desert. Although there were certainly flaws . . . in this proposal, it made a lot more sense than what the Reagan administration ultimately did with the MX missiles. By deciding to deploy them in existing (and vulnerable) Minuteman missile silos, not only did the administration fail to solve our strategic dilemma, but it gave the Soviets an even more inviting target. . . .

If President Bush is indeed serious about his commitment to build a strong defense, he should begin his administration by addressing the window-of-vulnerability issue. In the absence of strategic defense, the new President could enhance the land-based leg of our nuclear deterrent by deploying a large number of mobile ICBMs which is, of course, what the Soviets have been doing. In the long run, it is SDI which offers the free world its greatest hope of preventing potential nuclear aggression or intimidation. Angelo M. Codevilla has performed an admirable service by revealing the true nature of the threat we face.

GEOFFREY C. CHURCH
Los Angeles, California

ANGELO M. CODEVILLA writes:

Michael David Blume wonders why the Finlandization of Western Europe has not occurred. But in fact, Europe's growing accommodation to Soviet power is surely less honorable and more dangerous for us than Finland's submission ever was.

After World War II, the isolated Finns were forced into economic arrangements that subsidized the Soviets, into following a neutralist foreign policy, and into refraining from public criticism of the Soviet Union. But the Finns made the best of bad circumstances. The Finns never entertained, much less spread, illusions about the Soviets. They made the best military preparations for self-defense that they could. Today, as in 1941, the Soviets could overwhelm Finland, but they would pay even more dearly now than they did then.

By contrast, contemporary Western Europeans have followed German leaders—Egon Bahr, Willi Brandt, and Hans Dietrich Genscher—into a largely gratuitous appeasement of the Soviet Union. They have made safe circumstances into perilous ones. Instead of spending roughly 6 percent of GNP on defense as the U.S. does, Europeans spend half of that—and transfer the remaining 3 percent to the Soviet bloc in various kinds of subsidized trade. Moreover, Helmut Kohl, Margaret Thatcher, François Mitterrand, and Ciriaco De Mita of Italy have fostered illusions about the Soviet Union within their own bodies politic, and have insisted that the U.S. follow their lead in granting Gorbachev's desires.

It is no exaggeration to point out that in today's international struggles Western Europe, more often than not, lines up with the Soviets—or with Soviet clients—against Americans. For example, not only did the German government make no attempt to stop German firms from building Libya's chemical-weapons plant, but it lied to the U.S about its complicity, and lined up with the Soviet Union and the rest of Europe in opposing any action on the part of the U.S or Israel to destroy the factory. Other examples, like Nicaragua and the Middle East, come all too readily to mind.

The Germans still want U.S. troops on their soil. But increasingly they want these troops not to be armed with nuclear weapons. In other words, they want them as

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hostages. Americans have no reason to be confident about the Germans' attitude toward these hostages during a crisis. Germany is moving so wholeheartedly toward the Soviet sphere of influence that a year ago Chancellor Kohl felt it necessary to tell *Le Monde* that "Germany is not for sale." In today's Germany, it is more costly to utter anti-Soviet statements than it ever was in Finland.

Far be it from me to suggest that all of this results exclusively, or even primarily, from Europe's military inferiority. The tangled chain of causality probably runs in the opposite direction. Nevertheless, the size of the Soviet Union's military preponderance surely contributes to the Europeans' incentive to purchase peace at our expense.

Mr. Blume's denigration of military facts is downright cavalier. I wonder if he would be so relaxed about the Soviet Union's military advantages in Europe if he were a member of a reserve unit scheduled to be aboard the first eastbound reinforcement airplane, or if his children were stationed on the Elbe?

Mr. Blume feels safer because of the well-known fact that Poles, Hungarians, etc. hate the Soviets. But how would he—or American policy-makers, for that matter—answer a hypothetical Polish commander who asked: "We're willing to turn against the Soviets if they attack you—but only if you Westerners can show us that you have both the will and the means to make sure that when the smoke clears we and our families are no longer under Soviet control"? Without a good answer to that question, hopes for defections from Warsaw Pact ranks are unfounded.

Mr. Blume believes that British and French nuclear arsenals credibly threaten "valued Soviet assets" "in the wake of a conventional invasion." Really? Which ones? And what French and British assets do the somewhat more potent and largely invulnerable Soviet strategic forces threaten? I would suggest that Mr. Blume try his hand at a memorandum to the President of France and the British Prime Minister explaining to them what net gains (or losses) their countries might reap by actually shooting nuclear warheads at anything at all in the Soviet Union. The governing reality here is that deterrence works both ways, and that it works in rather precise relation to each side's actual capacity to achieve military victory.

As for the Soviets' preference for the "strategic periphery," I think Mr. Blume is about a decade behind the times. Europe and Japan are paying tribute today not because the Soviets have seized Angola, or even because of the (thus far failed) attempt to control the West's sources of oil. No. They are issuing tens of billions of dollars' worth of hard-currency "gift certificates" in large part because the East-West military balance is now such that it is no longer reasonable to hope for safety by being on the American side. Does Mr. Blume believe that Europe would be paying tribute if the central military balance today were as it was in the 60's?

If Mr. Blume wishes to be reassured by the fact that Soviet attack troops, in addition to being capable of winning a war, are also capable of holding down Germans, Czechs, Poles, etc., I can only suggest that the next time a mugger points a knife at him he remind himself that the knife can also be used in the mugger's domestic quarrels, and as a fancy toothpick.

The "intangibles" which the Secretary of Defense has used to minimize the significance of the atrocious numerical comparisons between Soviet and NATO forces are "leadership, training, and morale"—and have nothing to do with Mr. Blume's arguments.

Finally, it is Mr. Blume, not I, who uses such "tendentious" words as "stupid," "unpatriotic," and "shrill." Mr. Blume describes himself as a "hard-liner." Fair enough. My article was neither "hard" nor "soft." It was: "just the facts."

Joseph Forbes rightly reminds us that regardless of what happens in Moscow, Americans will always have something of a problem with a large, populous Russia: "Traditional, conservative Russia was an expansionist, aggressive nation." Poles, Ukrainians, Turks, and Kazakhs would agree. But Cubans, Vietnamese, Angolans, Ethiopians, Nicaraguans, and Yemenis would shake their heads in disbelief. The czars were not interested in such faraway places because the interests of Russia, though large, are of a concrete, limited nature. Unlike the interests of a regime animated (even only formally) by Communist ideology, Russia's interests do not involve world domination.

Thus the "old Russian insecurities" would be far more tractable than those of a regime whose very legitimacy, such as it is, consists in a bunch of tales according to which people who worship God and create wealth—anywhere—are the enemies of mankind.

Michael Daly rightly notes the "ominous" military threat the INF treaty has created for the West, but doubts whether we will act. He is right. Although there are a number of things we can do to remedy this situation, the prerequisite for adopting any of them is seriousness about military matters. But it is precisely this quality, alas, that is lacking in our leaders. See my monograph, *The Cure That May Kill* (London, 1988), for a study of the reasons none of the possible military remedies for the problems created by the INF treaty is likely to be implemented.

I thank Geoffrey C. Church for pointing to the nub of my article: a thread of military unseriousness has run through administrations of both parties. The issue is not properly one of Right versus Left, much less of Democrats versus Republicans. It is one of seriousness versus unseriousness.

Perhaps the most ominously unserious tool of contemporary policy-makers is to define problems in such a way as to give the appearance that certain actions, or inactions, are resolving them. But definitions do not change reality; they only serve to avert the eyes of those who make them. For example, in 1979-81 the U.S. government defined the military problem in Europe in terms of the presence of some 2,000 warheads atop Soviet SS-20 missiles. That was wrong. The problem was that Soviet military forces, overall, had become capable of crushing NATO fast. The U.S. government defined the interim solution as the deployment in Europe of 572 American intermediate-range warheads, and the ultimate solution as the removal of the SS-20s. In 1986 Gorbachev obliged us by proposing the INF treaty in which both the SS-20s *and* the American intermediate forces were banned. But the treaty specifically allows the Soviets to substitute the SS-25, a new and better missile, for the SS-20. Thus the INF treaty left NATO militarily weaker than it had been and talking wistfully about "compensatory measures." Worse, it was thoroughly befuddled because, according to the U.S. government's definitional framework,

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NATO's principal problem had just been solved.

Consider also Afghanistan. When the Soviets placed 100,000 troops in that country, the U.S. government began to aid the Afghan resistance, and defined the solution to the conflict as the withdrawal of Soviet troops. This formulation blinded American policymakers to the heart of the matter: the Soviet Union's desire to control Afghanistan without interference from the West.

In 1988 the Soviets offered a deal that fulfilled the Americans' unserious definition of victory. Soviet troops would be withdrawn in exchange for the end of American and Pakistani support for the resistance. The U.S. government jumped at it, and cut off much of its aid to the resistance. But withdrawal is not the point: *the point is the relative strength of forces on each side.*

Finally, consider Gorbachev's announcement at the UN that he would unilaterally cut the Soviet armed forces by 10 percent and remove 10,000 tanks from Eastern Europe. Note that the Soviet side is now ahead of NATO by far greater numbers, and that its superiority is more than quantitative. The Soviet Union has weapons—primarily mobile anti-missile devices, mobile ballistic missiles, and air defenses—that the West does not have. Remember that the last time a Soviet dictator (the even more liberal Nikita Khrushchev) cut the Soviet armed forces it was to streamline them into the much more fearsome instrument we have today. But above all remember that the prerequisite for serious consideration of the meaning of Gorbachev's cuts depends largely on what happens on the *Western* side of the equation. If Western Europe lets down its already submarginal guard, Gorbachev will wind up with an even more favorable military balance than he has today.

In sum, seriousness means looking at the real world rather than at convenient images thereof.

Richard Nixon

To the Editor of Commentary:

After reading Paul Johnson on President Nixon's *1999* ["In Praise of Richard Nixon," October 1988], I began to wonder whether we had read the same book. It saddens me to say this about a writer whose work I have much admired, but Mr. Johnson ignored many questions about Richard Nixon which need to be discussed. . . .

For some months now I have been trying to figure out where and how President Reagan's leap of faith in Mikhail Gorbachev started. After careful study of Nixon's latest book of foreign-policy prescriptions plus his earlier post-presidential writings, I believe that in Reagan's second term the voice was the voice of Reagan but the hands were the hands of Nixon. The discomforting question is this: was Nixon's takeover of Reagan a good thing for the cause of freedom? Judging from Nixon's latest book, I think not.

Yet it is no mean achievement to have served as the President's President, to have transformed a conservative Reagan into a détentist Reagan. It is certainly a remarkable way to have salvaged a ruined political career. And is it not some kind of triumph that the headline in a 1986 *Newsweek* cover story read: "He's Back: The Rehabilitation of Richard Nixon. An Exclusive Interview"?

Katherine Graham owns the Washington *Post*, which had determinedly striven to destroy the Nixon presidency. Mrs. Graham also owns *Newsweek*. Thirteen years after his downfall, her newsmagazine resurrected Nixon as the rehabilitated fallen angel. The magazine praised Nixon because he had "left a legacy of solid achievement, especially in foreign affairs." (The "solid achievement" also included Nixon's introduction of wage and price controls, an unprecedented event in U.S. peacetime history.) . . . When *Newsweek* cheers a Nixon epiphany, Paul Johnson ought to rethink his enthusiasm about Nixon in the ascendant.

In the *Newsweek* interview, Nixon protested that he is still an anti-Communist, "perhaps in a somewhat more sophisticated way than most of the current hawks . . . and therefore considered by them a closet dove." Unfortunately, he did not define what he meant by "sophisticated," although I assume the current version of Reagan would fit the Nixon category. . . .

Nixon's world, as he says in his book, is populated by three kinds of people—superhawks, never quite defined; superdoves, also never quite defined except by example—i.e., Jimmy Carter; and the best and the brightest, the hardheaded détentists exemplified by Nixon and his détentist foreign policy from 1969 to 1974—or, as Nixon now calls it, détente plus deterrence. It was after he was forced out of office, he says, that "détente lost the hard edge of military deterrence."

Nixon says that while many anti-Communists in the West "reviled the policy of détente, . . . the anti-Communists in the East supported this approach wholeheartedly." Presumably the anti-Communists in the East supported détente because it relaxed tensions between the superpowers. Relaxing tensions would allow the East European peoples a little more freedom, thereby weakening the Kremlin dictatorship. But if that were the case, why were anti-Communists in the West, like George Meany, for example, reviling détente? Why did the 1975 AFL-CIO convention pass a resolution condemning détente as "a one-way street in which American concessions have not been reciprocated by the Soviet Union" and warning that détente was "strengthening the Soviet Union at the expense of the West"? What did Nixon know that the AFL-CIO didn't know?

Nixon says that "[A] reduction in East-West tensions divides the East more than it does the West." Confrontation makes a dictatorship stronger while contact and negotiation can weaken it.

Now here we have a bizarre paradox. Nixon describes Gorbachev, whom he has met in Moscow, as a formidable opponent. If contact, negotiations, and a relaxation of tensions weaken a dictatorship, why would the dictator himself embrace those policies? Why would the USSR with its "bicycle" ideology—stop pedaling and down you go—allow itself to be weakened? Or is the risk, if any, worth taking because détente enfeebles the democratic will to resist Communist imperialism?

Nixon says that were it not for summitry, which contributes to détente, the Kremlin could achieve its forty-year-old objective—the disintegration of NATO and, concomitantly, the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Europe. With summitry, however, NATO is presumably strengthened, or at least saved from falling apart. So why, then, does Gorbachev keep going to summits? Mr. Johnson's article, I'm afraid, failed to address such questions.

The purpose of the Nixon book

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is to be found in Chapter 5, "How to Negotiate with Moscow." Even though the differences between both sides are "irreconcilable" and no permanent solutions are possible, he writes, negotiations are essential. Why? Nixon says that while the United States and the Soviet Union can never be friends, they cannot afford to be enemies. Does Mr. Johnson agree with that finding? The statement may be true for the United States but, surely, not for the USSR. Without America as the permanent threat, what justification would there be for the Soviet dictatorship, or for its spending 15 percent of Soviet GNP on arms? . . .

As for détente itself, what happened to that state of grace when, during the 1973 Yom Kippur War, Leonid Brezhnev sent Algeria (and a day later, all Arab countries) a call to arms in a message saying that "Syria and Egypt must not remain alone in their fight against a perfidious enemy"? Then, showing Soviet contempt for détente, Brezhnev expressed the hope that the Arab aggression against Israel would not disturb "détente." And this was after the U.S. and the USSR had pledged themselves to notify each other if and when they learned of pending military actions among the nations of the world.

Well, détente was not disturbed even though on October 25, 1973, Nixon ordered a grade-3 nuclear alert and even though Brezhnev made it clear that he was prepared to send in Red Army airborne divisions to rescue the encircled Egyptian Third Army unless the Israelis withdrew.

Richard Pipes in COMMENTARY ["Team B: The Reality Behind the Myth," October 1986] has written that Nixon and Kissinger staked their political careers on détente. They disliked intelligence estimates which stressed the Soviet threat. That, too, was détente *à la* Nixon.

As I read Nixon's book, I found myself thinking that what Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn has called the "Kissinger syndrome" applies to Nixon as well: "Individuals, while holding high office, pursue a policy of appeasement and capitulation . . . but immediately upon retirement the scales fall from their eyes and they begin to advocate firmness and resolution."

As for Nixon's standing in American public opinion: despite "rehabilitation" by *Newsweek* and Paul Johnson's high praise, what candidate running for public office would today, thirteen years after Watergate, regard Nixon's endorsement as an election-day asset?

ARNOLD BEICHMAN
Hoover Institution
Stanford, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Possibly because of his British background, possibly because of zeal in presenting his case, Paul Johnson seems to me to misapprehend the character and achievement of Richard Nixon. . . .

In his latest writing Nixon may now want this country to be a "great people," going "beyond the call of duty" to "enlarge the freedoms enjoyed all over the world." But many of us recall Nixon's frequently expressed loathing for "do-gooders" and "bleeding hearts" who under postwar Democratic administrations actually tried to initiate and carry out magnanimous internationalist policies. The "magnanimity" Paul Johnson attributes to Richard Nixon may come easier to him now that, out of the presidency and the active political battle, he can write *à la* Kissinger about balance of power and enlightened self-interest. But, again, many of us can reminisce: what kind of magnanimity inspired Nixon one year, on a presidential salary and with a substantial private income, to contribute less than $1,000 to charity? . . .

Paul Johnson endorses the opinion of many champions of Richard Nixon, and of many others as well, that the opening to China was a conceptual and foreign-policy achievement of historic proportions. I should like to suggest that it was an unmistakable signal and demonstration to the world of the unreliability of American guarantees and assurances—the worst such instance in our history until the pull-out from Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam. . . .

The question has been raised whether, in making the opening to China, Nixon did not have in mind above all else the impression he would make on the American voter; whether he was not principally intent on scoring a victory in the impending 1972 elections? . . . He was, in just about everyone's mind, already certain to win that election; but in the case of Richard Nixon, megalomaniacal considerations cannot be ruled out—no less or no more in the case of the China opening than in what was later to be labeled the Watergate caper.

The opening was carried out in what many Americans regard as characteristic Nixonian fashion: by stealth. The National Security Adviser, Henry Kissinger, journeyed to Pakistan and, pleading a stomach disorder, disappeared for a few days during which he skulked off to Peking. No friendly or allied country (except, I presume, Pakis-

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tan) was informed of what was planned by the leader of the free world with regard to one of its bitterest enemies. Least of all were the American people in any way alerted to what was planned in the name of their country. And what was achieved by the acclaimed China opening? First, Nixon won the 1972 election and won it just about as big as any ordinary human being could wish to. After that, in his new term in office, events in Washington moved relentlessly against the murky backdrop of Watergate and would culminate in tragedy for him and for the country. . . .

Paul Johnson resents the lack of confidence shown by liberals when Nixon "set about fulfilling his campaign promise of scaling down, then ending the Vietnam war. . . ." This campaign promise was, of course, another "secret" undertaking of President Nixon's. Obviously the American electorate was superhumanly naive when it bought this particular pig in a poke from a politician whom many had come to call "Tricky Dick"; especially so after all the spurious promises and assurances it had been subjected to during the span of the Johnson years.

Whether or not a secret Nixon plan to end the war actually existed is a question that has hardly been addressed and never answered. Whatever the fact, during the Nixon presidency the war in Southeast Asia cost 25,000 additional American lives and even more allied and enemy lives, military and civilian, all human, and overwhelmingly Oriental. Nor can it be argued that this further slaughter and sacrifice added a shred of honor or advantage to the manner in which our country finally left Vietnam.

JUAN DE ZENGOTITA
Duxbury, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Paul Johnson's irredeemably tendentious "In Praise of Richard Nixon" fails to aid the rehabilitation effort. The Nixon record is too fresh in the memory for this attempt to reconstruct history. . . .

Nixon's pre-Watergate career included: (1) the 1950 smear campaign against Helen Gahagan Douglas; (2) the 1952 resort to the "Checkers" speech to avert being dumped from the Republican ticket because of the slush-fund scandal; (3) the 1968 campaign's "secret plan" to end the Vietman war.

Four years and thousands of additional U.S. and Vietnamese combat fatalities later, the Watergate investigation unraveled the most corrupt administration in American history. The Watergate story of scandal, corruption, and paranoid persecution of political opponents was congruent with the rest of Nixon's career.

Consequently, it will be impossible for Nixon apologists to dismiss Watergate as a media and East Coast establishment attack on an otherwise virtuous public official. As Barry Goldwater has said, "I don't think he should be forgiven. He came as close to destroying America as any man in that office has ever done." Goldwater is not an avatar of the East Coast establishment, but neither is he a disinterested "outsider" able to affect Mr. Johnson's level of insouciance toward the Nixon abuses of public office.

Clearly embarking on a journey of pure fantasy, Mr. Johnson goes so far as to claim that, "by a curious paradox, Richard Nixon was one of the very few people who emerged from the Watergate affair *with credit*" (emphasis added). A curious paradox, indeed, if it were remotely true. Once again, Goldwater is nearer the mark in his recently published autobiography: "He [Nixon] was the most dishonest individual I ever met in my life. . . . President Nixon lied to his wife, his family, his friends, his longtime colleagues in the U.S. Congress, the lifetime members of his own political party, the American people, and the world."

Mr. Johnson's transparent myth-making, however, ascribes the blame for Watergate to elements of the East Coast establishment. He believes that "The powerful barons of the Eastern press and TV felt themselves morally and constitutionally entitled to snatch back the power [Nixon] had secured from the voters by (as they saw it) chicanery. All they needed was a pretext."

If so, Nixon went overboard in providing an adequate pretext. Fawn Brodie (*Richard Nixon: The Shaping of His Character*) relates the offenses itemized by the House Judiciary Committee as including: ". . . lying, burglary, forgery, illegal wiretapping, obstruction of justice, destruction of evidence, tampering with witnesses, misprision of felony, bribery, and conspiracy to involve government agencies in illegal actions."

Why did Nixon go to such lengths to cover up a petty offense by low-level functionaries? Mr. Johnson tells us the answer is "misplaced loyalties." Loyalty to whom? E. Howard Hunt, perhaps? Hunt was the subject of the March 21, 1973 tape wherein the President of the United States discussed raising blackmail money to keep him quiet. . . .

Why would the President contemplate blackmail to cover up a political dirty trick? To protect his image? The most glaring flaw in the he-only-got-caught-doing-what-others-did-before-him argument is: if that is true, why embark on a massive fraud and conspiracy to cover up such an incident?

The criminal violations perpetrated during the cover-up are sufficient to distinguish Nixon's presidency from any other in American history. . . . It was the extent of the cover-up and the antecedent practices of his administration and not a single burglary that led to Nixon's resignation.

For that reason the statement that political dirty tricks were not unprecedented is irrelevant. Owing to Watergate, the cynicism of a generation of Americans toward politics and politicians has been greatly increased. . . .

Perhaps we should charitably assume that Paul Johnson's article was born of a mere lack of detailed knowledge.

JAMES J. MOORE, JR.
Houston, Texas

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Watergate was not an unfair attack by the Eastern establishment. Nixon and his cronies did not set out to subvert the Constitution, but they did subvert it in effect in the process of pursuing their ends without regard to potential consequences while thinking themselves protected by executive privilege. The Watergate hearings were models of fairness. As far as the subsequent court cases are concerned, I am certain that had Paul Johnson or I been caught perpetrating similar hijinks we would have received juicy sentences.

Finally, the Kennedy clan has given this nation a great deal of public service. Glaring personal imperfections notwithstanding, they provided a brilliant moment in American history and continue

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On the Sandinistas:
Contra military commander Enrique Bermudez charged in POLICY REVIEW that "the Sandinistas have played the United States for a fool." *New York Times*

On Jeane Kirkpatrick:
In a POLICY REVIEW interview Jeane Kirkpatrick said: "The single most important change in my views in the last decade has been a much greater appreciation of market economics." *John Chamberlain, King Features Syndicate*

On Our Judeo-Christian Heritage:
In POLICY REVIEW Rabbi Joshua Haberman said that the bulwark we have against tyranny in this country is our firm belief in God and our firm belief in some standard of authority above government. *Pat Robertson, "Candidates '88 with Marvin Kalb"*

On the Evil Empire:
Picking up from President Reagan's phrase "evil empire," POLICY REVIEW's article, "Seventy Years of Evil," encapsulates some of the grimmer episodes of Soviet history. It is important reading. *Boston Globe*

On SDI:
Bob, you've talked about support for SDI, but you wrote in POLICY REVIEW that you would use it as a negotiating chip. *Representative Jack Kemp to Senator Bob Dole, NBC Presidential Debate*

On Republican Party Politics:
Jack Kemp elaborates the anti-establishment conservative case in POLICY REVIEW: "Despite its smaller size, only the activist wing can set the direction for the whole [Republican] party." The "establishment wing" is merely interested in "managing the status quo." *Sidney Blumenthal, Washington Post*

On Conservatism's Parched Grass Roots:
Amy Moritz wrote in POLICY REVIEW that the current state of the conservative movement is weak because in most cases leaders don't call on the millions of grass-roots activists except for financial contributions. *Washington Times*

On Media Bias:
ABC-TV reporter Rebecca Chase admitted that network producers, hell-bent on locating dire hunger, asked her "to scour the small towns of Mississippi to find hungry people . . . but I couldn't find any," she said in POLICY REVIEW. *Fred Barnes, Reader's Digest*

On the Family Farmer:
From "family farmer" Blake Hurst's article in POLICY REVIEW: "We don't really like accepting subsidies. But if we didn't enroll in government farm programs, our corn would be worth $1.80 a bushel; because we participate, we receive $3. Everybody has his price. Now you know ours." *Wall Street Journal*

On Crime and Punishment:
[In POLICY REVIEW Charles] Colson, former special counsel to President Nixon, makes a pretty good case for alternative sentencing, including restitution to victims of nonviolent crime. *William Raspberry, Washington Post*

On Angola:
Savimbi's strategy, as he outlines in POLICY REVIEW, is " . . . to raise the costs of the foreign occupation of Angola until the Cubans and the Soviets can no longer bear the burden." *Norman Podhoretz, Washington Post*

On Anti-Communism:
POLICY REVIEW . . . is the organ of the Heritage Foundation—the brain center of the most rabid reaction. *Pravda*

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to contribute to our political life. . . .

But none of the above comments is meant to denigrate in any way the profound achievements in foreign policy during the Nixon presidency or suggest that we should not honor Nixon's continuing and important contributions in these matters.

ERICH SCHARF
Massapequa, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The article by Paul Johnson is remarkable for the boldness with which it puts things in perspective and makes some commonsensical observations that offend the pieties of our liberal establishment and of the academic Left, who are no more eager than anyone else to see their sacred cows revealed as bull. Mr. Johnson accurately notes the visceral loathing that many of these people feel for our former President and puts his finger on some of the causes, not least among them snobbery; but he does not mention a specific event that both enhanced Nixon's stature as a national figure and grated on the sensibilities of "the right sort of people": the Hiss case.

I was at that time an undergraduate at an Ivy League university. I do not remember all the details of the case, but I clearly recall the widespread feeling, which I am ashamed to say I shared, that, after all, who was Whittaker Chambers that one should take his word over that of Alger Hiss, a gentleman, like ourselves? It was Nixon, unencumbered by this sort of nonsense, who persisted until it became clear that while Hiss may or may not have been a gentleman, he was also a liar and a few other nasty things.

I have long wondered whether the resentment of some of those who had to swallow that bitter pill has not been passed on to their students and now to their students' students, and whether it does not in part explain the Pavlovian reactions that Nixon's name still provokes in the academy and in the media.

JOHN POLT
Oakland, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The stimulating article, "In Praise of Richard Nixon," by Paul Johnson points to the key role the media played in destroying the Nixon presidency but not Nixon the man.

It is just possible that the public has now caught on to TV's manipulative blitzes and is making up its own mind on Presidents and presidential candidates. . . . The bottom line in the media campaign against Ronald Reagan is that George Bush benefited mightily by following in Reagan's footsteps.

When it comes to credibility, it looks as if the media are beginning to have more problems than the candidates they attempt to expose.

NORMAN KOLIN
Fort Wayne, Indiana

PAUL JOHNSON writes:

On détente: having discussed the Gorbachev phenomenon with both Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger, I find myself in close agreement with their cautious and skeptical but essentially pragmatic approach, which so far has been fully justified by events, especially recent ones. Détente does involve risk but, as Churchill said in this context, "jaw-jaw is better that war-war."

Nixon's reconciliation with China was one of those deals, involving ideological retraction, which statesmen make in the longer-term and higher interests of society. Other recent examples are President de Gaulle's settlement in Algeria and Mrs. Thatcher's in Rhodesia.

James J. Moore, Jr. evidently knows little of past presidencies if he believes Nixon's was "the most corrupt administration in American history," and I am sorry his case is so weak that he has to cite those feeble items from the liberal hate litany, the Helen Douglas and Checkers affairs, let alone the opinions of Barry Goldwater, a man whose views in any other context he would regard as preposterous.

To those Americans still inclined to moralize about Nixon's role in Watergate—a dwindling band—let me point out that the U.S. system of justice does not emerge well from the business, either. Just one example: for a first offense, taking part in a burglary in which nothing was stolen, no one hurt, and no resistance offered to police, G. Gordon Liddy was sentenced to twenty years in jail, of which he served nearly five before President Carter took pity on him. His real crime was not burglary at all but his refusal to participate in the campaign of judicial terrorism then being waged by Judge John Sirica.

The alleged central crime of Watergate was the unsuccessful attempt to obstruct justice. But the worst example, during recent times, of justice-obstruction in America—successful, too—was the Chappaquiddick affair. This involved not a petty break-in but a dead woman. The beneficiary of this obstruction is still a prominent member of the U.S. Senate and frequently offers the world moralistic advice, notably on Ireland and South Africa.

"In God We Trust"

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Wilfred M. McClay's article, "Religion in Politics; Politics in Religion" [October 1988], contains a factual error. . . . The phrase "In God We Trust" was first added to U.S. currency, not in the 1950's as Mr. McClay states, but in 1864. The phrase "Under God" was indeed added to the Pledge of Allegiance in the 1950's. What is striking is that both of these changes came immediately upon the heels of great military struggles reflecting great conflicts in the *spiritual* realm.

Although some of today's secular revisionists have sought to minimize the importance of abolitionism as a factor in the Civil War, it remains a central motivating force. More precisely, abolitionism derived its energy from *religious* sentiment. Thus it was entirely appropriate for a religious people, emerging wartorn and weary from a war fought at least partially on religious grounds, to add this motto to their money.

Then, in the years following World War II, the almost incredible depth of evil manifested by the neopagan Nazi regime made Americans realize that their victory was a narrow escape. . . . Their tremendous relief upon emerging victorious from such a close brush with hell made the emendation of the Pledge seem entirely appropriate. . . .

In today's unbelieving age, the meaning of these mottoes, these artifacts from earlier victories accomplished in faith, is lost on a generation whose closest encounters with evil have taken place at Halloween horror shows. In addition, the Christian clergy are so benumbed by their obsession with safe antagonists like nuclear war and economic injustice that they have neglected to preach the "whole counsel of God." Mr. McClay mentions one example of

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such neglect, the failure to attempt to come to terms with the inscrutability of a God who takes a young woman under tragic circumstances. A consideration of the "problem of evil" is central to any civilized spiritual quest. Consequently, our present-day failure to grapple with it is central to the deterioration in our civilization. . . .

MARK R. BATEMAN
St. Clair Shores, Michigan

WILFRED M. MCCLAY writes:

Mark R. Bateman is quite right about the year in which the inscription "In God We Trust" first appeared on a U.S. coin. Indeed, he might also have mentioned that the prime mover behind that motto's appearance on a two-cent bronze piece in 1864 was Treasury Secretary Salmon P. Chase, an ardent antislavery activist whose views were well to the "Left" of Lincoln's. But the fact remains that it was not until 1954 that the Congress required *all* coins and paper currency to feature those words. That is why I was careful to use the modifier "all" in my discussion of this matter.

IPS

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Joshua Muravchik offers some valid criticisms in his review of my book, *Covert Cadre: Inside the Institute for Policy Studies* [Books in Review, October 1988], but his points would be more effective if they were presented as a measured response, instead of a one-sided attack. I researched and wrote my book in the best tradition of investigative journalism, doing my utmost to tell a long and involved story with attention to every detail, nuance, and source. But there are risks in being comprehensive, particularly when working under the constraints of limited time and resources, and there comes a time when a book must go to press, even with whatever minor errors and stylistic flaws still remain. . . . As Mr. Muravchik well knows from his own experience in writing about the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS), it is impossible to land every arrow into a moving target surrounded by smoke and mirrors. Let me . . . try to put his criticisms into perspective.

First, Mr. Muravchik objects to my reference to a "Brzezinski-Linowitz approach" in the Carter administration's Latin American pol-

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icy. He rightly notes that Zbigniew Brzezinski and Sol Linowitz are at opposite poles of Democratic-party opinion on most foreign-policy matters, and it was wrong of me to lump them together categorically. The point I was trying to make is that both Linowitz and Brzezinski helped lay the intellectual groundwork for the Carter administration's foreign-policy initiatives—initiatives that took insufficient account of geopolitical concerns in general and Soviet adventurism in particular. . . .

Mr. Muravchik is also troubled by my evidence of the Left's influence on the Congressional Research Service (CRS). I looked into this only after a CRS staffer expressed concern about it. Through subsequent research and interviews . . . I learned that (1) CRS director Gilbert Gude had formerly been a member of the IPS-related Members of Congress for Peace Through Law; (2) that IPS associate fellow William LeoGrande had close relations with a staff member of CRS who was enthusiastic about LeoGrande's pro-Castro views and sought to promote them at CRS; and (3) that Stanley Heginbotham, then chief of the foreign-affairs and national-defense division of CRS, sought and received advice (yes, I agree that my use of the term *collaboration* was an overstatement) from Joseph Eldridge, director of the pro-Marxist Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) . . . .

But these points about CRS, to which I devote one paragraph, are a minor part of a 28-page chapter that documents IPS . . . influence on Congress, to a degree which both Mr. Muravchik and I find disturbing. The point I was driving at is that important people at CRS apparently considered LeoGrande, Eldridge, and WOLA intellectually and politically respectable. In fact, as *Covert Cadre* makes clear, they are not only biased and consistently hostile to the United States, but are propagandists for Latin American revolution.

Mr. Muravchik questions the legitimacy of using "an apparently purloined batch of the correspondence of Joseph Eldridge." These papers came into my hands as a result of the actions of one of WOLA's own staff members, and it would have been journalistically unethical for me to betray my source. Does Mr. Muravchik think I should have withheld citing primary source material that reveals Eldridge's affiliations, his cooperation with the Cuban and Sandinista regimes, his secret trip to Cuba, or his support for the late Sandy Pollack, a member of the central committee of the Communist Party USA?

Shortly after the Eldridge papers were published in my monograph by the Capital Research Center in 1986, Eldridge stepped down from WOLA, after heading it for twenty years. My initial efforts also encouraged others, like Fred Barnes of the *New Republic*, to expose WOLA for the pro-Marxist political creature that it is.

I wish Mr. Muravchik had paid more attention to the rest of my chapter on IPS and Congress, which reveals so much about the informal foreign-policy networks of influence that operate in Washington. . . . For example, I was present at an IPS meeting when Anne Holloway, the staff director of the House Subcommitee on Africa, made a telling remark: "I would say that there are really two foreign policies that operate in the country, one is the informal one . . . and the other is the one that exists here in Washington in the sense of federal institutions." Stressing the importance of the informal foreign-policy networks of influence, she named the Washington Office on Africa, TransAfrica, the Southern Africa Support Committee, the American Committee on Africa, and the Arms Control and Foreign Policy Caucus as the groups with whom she worked.

Jean Sindab, the director of the Washington Office on Africa, is an advisory board member of the IPS Washington School. Randall Robinson, the head of TransAfrica, has served as an IPS trustee. Peter Weiss, the chairman of IPS for nearly a decade, was also vice president of the American Committee on Africa, one of the first American organizations to host members of the African National Congress and the Communist-backed guerrilla organization SWAPO. . . .

There is more to the story that I left out of the book. At the same gathering at which Anne Holloway spoke was Soviet diplomat Vladimir Strokin, whom I purposely made a point of meeting. When I later called him at the Soviet embassy, he mistook my voice for that of Stephen Weissman, then IPS staff consultant. Strokin told me that he had very good rapport with Weissman.

In 1986 Weissman succeeded Anne Holloway as staff director of the House Subcommittee on Africa, and since then the "informal" foreign-policy networks of influence have played an increasingly important role in shaping the legislative debate and the subcommittee's agenda on U.S. policy toward South Africa. . . .

Mr. Muravchik is troubled by my characterization of IPS angel Samuel Rubin as a Communist party member, when the evidence suggests only that Rubin was registered as a Communist party voter and that therefore he was not under party discipline. Let me just say that no one on the Left has denied Rubin's CP membership, and I am hardly the first to have made the charge. . . .

Mr. Muravchik objects to my assertion that "the mass demonstrations against the Vietnam war were largely organized by Communist party members." But he knows that in a previous chapter dealing with the Vietnam war period, I spoke of the leadership role of the Trotskyist Socialist Workers party, the Yippies, and disparate elements of the New Left. The key point is that it was the Communists and Trotskyists, with all their organizational and propaganda know-how, who played the vanguard role, and in effect provided the guts and sinews of the antiwar movement.

Mr. Muravchik is justified in criticizing my treatment of Washington *Post* reporter Peter Osnos, whose comment I took from a secondary source critical of his coverage on Cuba. If I had gone back to the original Osnos article, I would have written the section differently. But the important point of this paragraph and the whole chapter on the media is that prominent reporters like Osnos lend credibility and legitimacy to IPS and its propaganda by participating in its programs.

Mr. Muravchik glosses over the enormous amount of primary source literature that I cite, but complains about my use of "footnotes which turn out to be empty . . . anonymous sources, undated news clippings, [and] secondary sources. . . ." Yet . . . fewer than one-fifth of my 1,340 notes are from secondary sources and there are five citations of updated news clippings and six anonymous sources. Naturally some people at IPS and others in related organizations talked to me only on condition of anonym-

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ity, but even if all these passages and references were deleted, it would not detract in any substantial way from the book's damning case against IPS.

Mr. Muravchik says he is troubled by not knowing whether some of these primary sources were from a tape-recording or a manuscript or whether or not I was present. My goal was always to get primary-source documentation. My research assistants and I read almost everything ever published by IPS, and we transcribed tape-recordings of the countless meetings that we attended. On those few occasions where taping was not appropriate, I relied on careful note-taking and the shorthand of an extremely competent legal secretary. If the quotations I cite from these meetings were actually backed by vacuous footnotes, I am sure those whom I quote would have stepped forward with objections. . . .

Mr. Muravchik asserts that I am fixated on the question of whether IPS is secretly financed or controlled by a foreign power. On the contrary, after 350 pages of recounting and documenting IPS activities that include fairly frequent contact with Soviet and East bloc personnel, I state: "Whether the Soviets have direct influence on or control over any IPS personnel is less relevant than that it is a matter of record that IPS activities frequently fall in line with Soviet active-measures campaigns conducted against the United States." . . .

On balance, Mr. Muravchik's review shows a pedantic tendency to single out minor shortcomings without giving proper credit to the book's strengths. Had he chosen to undertake the project himself, Mr. Muravchik undoubtedly would have written a different book. But in general my views on IPS and his are in close accord, judging by the thrust of his essay on IPS in the New York *Times* of April 26, 1981. The reader of his review of my book would hardly be left with that impression, however.

In dealing with sensitive subject matter, writers must be careful not to use language that can be misconstrued on a hasty reading. Mr. Muravchik knows that "McCarthyism" is an emotionally laden term that has become a political weapon to discourage investigation and publication of . . . material that would harm the Left's integrity, particularly among liberals. . . . Senator Joseph McCarthy hurt the cause of anti-Communism by ignoring elementary ethics, incriminating many individuals on questionable evidence and charges that appealed more to emotion than reason. But this is not what I have done in *Covert Cadre*, and it was careless and unfair of Mr. Muravchik to have made such an inference. It is unfortunate . . . that such an unbalanced review may assist the very forces that Mr. Muravchik and I are both trying to halt.

SCOTT STEVEN POWELL
Hoover Institution
Stanford, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It was disappointing to read Joshua Muravchik's review of Scott Steven Powell's *Covert Cadre: Inside the Institute for Policy Studies*. Not that Mr. Muravchik's specific concerns were not, for the most part, justified: it is important indeed not to infer ideological connections where the evidence is not conclusive, and one's footnotes should contain the very best references possible. Yet Mr. Muravchik's review, by focusing almost exclusively on the book's drawbacks, fails to point out the massive documentation and painstaking analysis that makes this one of the most impressive exposés to date of a pernicious, indeed dangerous, institution—the Institute for Policy Studies, whose decidedly left-wing agenda must bear the closest scrutiny. Powell's book is hardly McCarthyite, occasional slips or overzealous inferences notwithstanding.

JULIANA GERAN PILON
The Heritage Foundation
Washington, D.C.

JOSHUA MURAVCHIK writes:

Scott Steven Powell is right in saying that he and I agree that the Institute for Policy Studies is an unsavory outfit given to anti-Americanism and to apologetics for leftist tyrannies. It deserves to be exposed and stigmatized. The job of doing this, however, requires careful attention to rules of evidence and argument.

On most of my points of criticism that he takes up, Mr. Powell concedes error. He exaggerated the similarity of the views of Sol Linowitz and Zbigniew Brzezinski; he exaggerated the relationship between Stanley Heginbotham of the Congressional Research Service and Joseph Eldridge of WOLA; he exaggerated the role of the Communist party in the antiwar movement; he misstated the evidence about Samuel Rubin's relationship to the Communist party; and he misrepresented Peter Osnos's article about Cuba in the Washington *Post* because he relied on a secondary source. Nonetheless he protests that the gist of his argument is true. I agree, but this is simply not an adequate standard for the kind of investigative work Mr. Powell has tried to do.

Would that these were the only such errors that I found in Mr. Powell's book, but in fact they are only a sample from a much larger pool, reflecting a carelessness which will undermine his argument in the eyes of those less predisposed than he and I are to see IPS as a malign organization. Mr. Powell argues that he had to cover a wealth of material in difficult circumstances. I am sure this is so, but the solution is really quite simple. Only assert that for which you have evidence, and supply the evidence for that which you assert.

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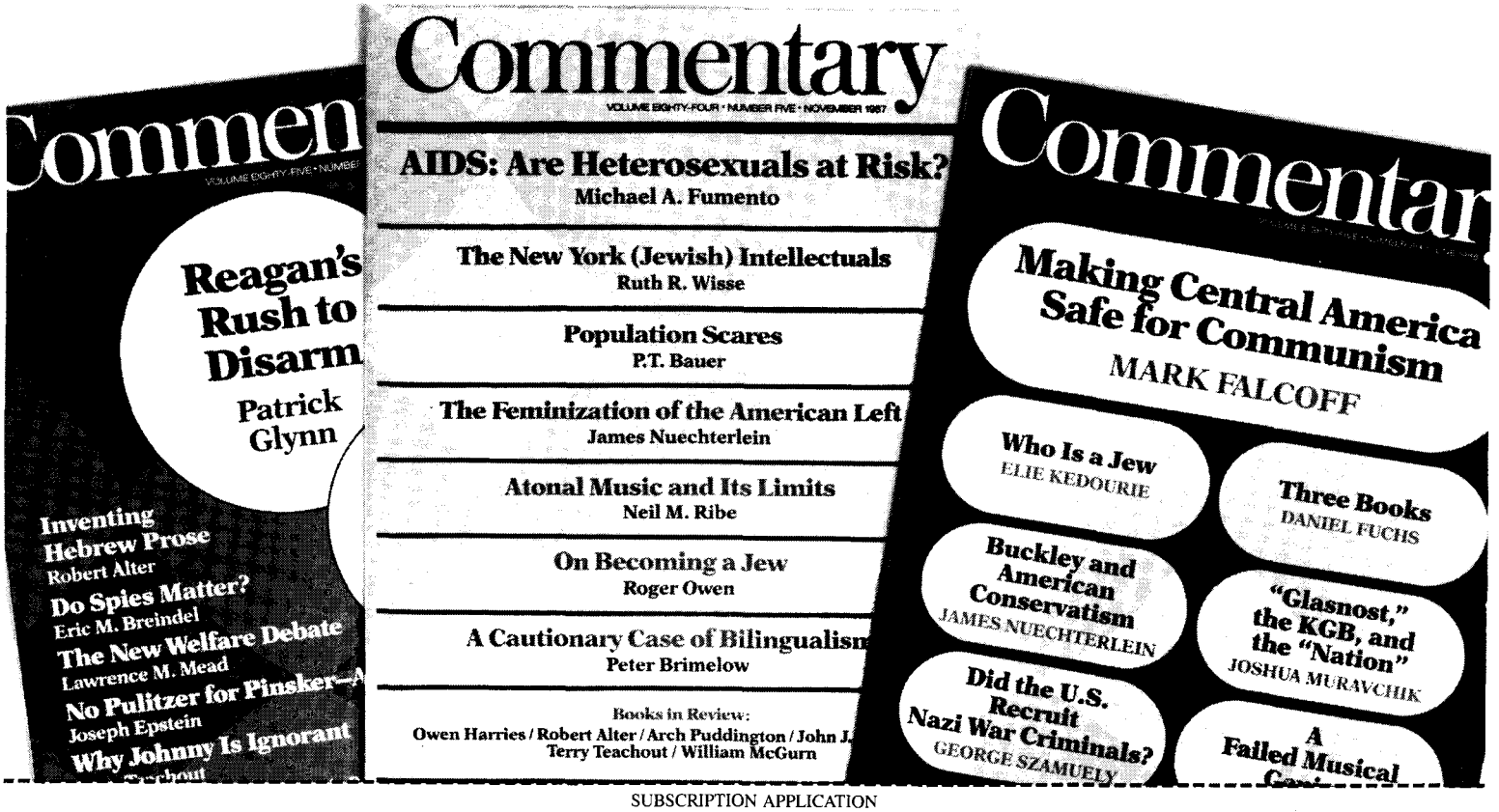

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Israel: A Lamentation From the Future

Norman Podhoretz

LOOKING backward from this grim point in the 21st century, we Jews—the dwindling remnant of a critically wounded people—are still tormented by the memory of the things we did and the things we failed to do in the accursed days when Israel was finally lost. After Hitler, we had vowed over and over that we would never again stand by in helpless passivity and watch a community of our fellow Jews being destroyed for the crime of being Jewish. And yet this time it was worse, much worse. This time we were not merely passive. This time we helped the destruction along.

Please understand me. I am not speaking here of the kind of help that Hannah Arendt said the Jews of Europe gave to the Nazis. According to her, in carrying out their genocidal program against the Jews, the Nazis received Jewish cooperation "to a truly extraordinary degree." Everywhere, she wrote,

> Jewish officials could be trusted to compile the lists of persons and of their property, to secure money from the deportees to defray the expenses of their deportation and extermination, to keep track of vacated apartments, to supply police forces to help seize Jews and get them on trains, until, as a last gesture, they handed over the assets of the Jewish community in good order for final confiscation.

True; all true. But what was not true was that these deluded and infinitely pathetic efforts to save a few Jews from the ovens had the opposite effect, as Arendt claimed, of increasing the number of victims. For the plain fact is that the Nazis were so determined to rid the world of Jews that nothing the Jews themselves did or failed to do would have altered the final tally to any appreciable extent.

With Israel it was different. Indeed, the whole point of establishing a Jewish state was to make it different in precisely this respect. With a state of their own, Jews would no longer be the mere objects of a historical fate over which they had no control. No longer would they depend for their very lives on the toleration or the favor of others. Now they would depend on themselves, and anyone who went after them again would come up against a wall of guns.

Brave sentiments; and for about twenty-five years—from the founding of the state in 1948 through the Yom Kippur War of 1973—they generated brave deeds.

In retrospect, we all realize that this was a relatively easy time to be brave. Even though the Israelis were living under siege and even though they kept having to send their young out to fight and die, the fact that the Arab world was openly dedicated to destroying the Jewish state served to concentrate the Jewish mind wonderfully—and not only within Israel itself but also throughout the Diaspora.

Within Israel itself, this clarity of vision extended even to the intellectuals. I say "even" in part out of the sardonic impulse that led George Orwell to observe so famously of certain predictions about World War II that "One has to belong to the intelligentsia to believe things like that; no ordinary man could be such a fool." But my use of the word "even" here is also dictated by the recognition of how unusual it has been for the intellectuals of any democratic country to join with the general population and its elected political representatives in a common understanding of the national predicament. In other words, in the first three decades of Israel's existence, its intellectuals were remarkable in *not* being alienated.

Not that the intellectuals of Israel were any less left-wing as a group than their counterparts everywhere else in the world. On the contrary, they were if anything probably more homogeneous in their commitment to socialism than the intellectuals of Western Europe and certainly than the intellectuals of the United States. But in those years in Israel to be a socialist was to be a member of the establishment, and in more ways than one. For not only was the country being run politically by one's fellow socialists, but they were likely to be personal friends or acquaintances, from the army or from the Palmach or just from moving in the same social circles.

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No wonder, then, that Israeli intellectuals felt that the country belonged to them and that they were so quick to defend it against criticism.

There was, of course, a rightist opposition, led by Menachem Begin, and there were even a few intellectuals who supported it. But since it is in the nature of right-wing parties to be fervently patriotic, there was no danger that Begin and his people would lose sight of the distinction (which would later prove so elusive to the left-wing intellectuals when they in their turn were forced into opposition) between attacking their political adversaries and vilifying the nation.

In short, for all practical purposes, the Israelis—fractious and quarrelsome though they might have been on every other issue—were united in their assessment of the external threat to their country's very existence and in their determination to defend themselves, in the ideological sphere no less than in the military.

In America (which can stand here for the Diaspora in general), things were a bit more complicated. Prior to 1948, to begin with, enthusiasm for the idea of Jewish statehood in Palestine was by no means universal among American Jews. Among the Orthodox, it was widely though not unanimously regarded as a sin to set up a state in the Holy Land, let alone a secular one, before the coming of the Messiah. Within the Reform community, many saw Zionism as a regression to a more primitive or tribal stage of Jewish history and also feared that a Jewish state would raise the issue of dual loyalty. Secularists of the socialist persuasion tended to look upon Zionism as a form of retrograde bourgeois nationalism, while assimilationists of other persuasions were either hostile or indifferent.

Once the state was actually founded, of course, most of these arguments became academic. Furthermore, the fact that the entire Arab world had pledged itself to wipe Israel off the map now made it impossible to oppose Jewish statehood without collaborating in, or at least lending aid and comfort to, yet another genocidal campaign against the Jews. Amazingly, there were a few Jews who did not shrink even from this; but only a very few. The vast majority of the hitherto anti-Zionist or non-Zionist more or less quietly dropped their old doctrines and programs and either went about their other business or shifted to a posture of support for Israel.

Up until 1967, however, a certain degree of this support remained reluctant, grudging, tepid. The old anti-Zionist doctrines might have been consigned to the trash can of history, but the sentiments that had accompanied them still fluttered in many a Jewish heart. Mostly they took the form of a disposition to blame Israel for the trouble it was in with the Arabs, especially over what in the 1950's, before the founding of the PLO, was still called the refugee question. But these sour sentiments could also break out over other issues. Some of us can still remember, for example, the great and almost vindictive relish with which certain former non-Zionists joined the Eisenhower administration in pressuring Israel to retreat from the Sinai after the 1956 campaign. And we can also remember how eagerly many of these same people rushed to condemn the seizure of Eichmann by Israel as a violation of international law.

But not even this kind of thing could manage to survive the Six-Day War of 1967. Confronted with Nasser's explicit threat to destroy Israel and to drive its Jewish inhabitants into the sea, and faced with a world prepared to watch him do it, the Jews of America went through a kind of mass conversion to Zionism. Those who were already Zionists were born again, and those who had resisted or remained indifferent now experienced what might be described as a baptism by proxy fire. Thus did Israel now truly become the "religion" of American Jews.

In the history of this "religion," the Yom Kippur War of 1973 figured as a reinforcing revelation. Once again Israel was threatened with annihilation; once again there was a period of intense anxiety over the outcome (though this one came during the war rather than immediately before it); and once again the Jews of America responded as though their own lives were at stake, as though in some mysterious way they themselves would be driven into the sea if Israel were overrun.

And so in the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War, Israel remained the religion of American Jews. To be sure, this new religion did not require of its devotees that they actually settle in Israel; it was never Zionist in the maximalist sense. But it did command that they do whatever they could to ensure the security and survival of the Jewish state. And to this commandment they were faithfully obedient. They gave incredible amounts of money. They emitted warm tidal waves of moral support. They helped politicians who were friendly toward Israel and they opposed those who were less than sympathetic.

But there was one thing they were not required to do: they were not required to feel politically or morally or ideologically uncomfortable about their support of Israel. In those days, most American Jews were liberals and in those days, too, most liberals were pro-Israel. Accordingly no conflict arose between the general political perspective of the Jews and their particularistic commitment to Israel. On the contrary: the two lived so harmoniously together that some Jews sometimes mistook them for a single entity. Asked by public-opinion pollsters what it meant to be a good Jew, they often answered that for all practical purposes it meant being for Israel and being a liberal, and by a happy circularity being a liberal also meant (among other things, of course) being for Israel.

If, then, it was relatively easy for the Jews of Israel to be brave throughout the first twenty-five

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years after the establishment of the state, it was even easier for the Jews of America to be staunch.

Then came Begin.

WITHIN Israel, the defeat of the Labor party and the sudden transformation in 1977 of Begin from leader of the opposition to Prime Minister inaugurated a new period not merely in the political history of the country but also in its cultural and spiritual development. Now for the first time the old establishment was out, and to make this sudden fall even harder to take, power was passing to a man who had been hated and feared by the entire Israeli Left since the period of the British Mandate.

Israel being a democracy, and politicians in a democracy tending on the whole to be reasonable and practical people, Begin's accession encountered no serious challenge within the political system as such. Many in the Labor party undoubtedly felt that there was something illegitimate about the new government, that for Labor to be out and Likud to be in represented a disruption of the natural political order. But Labor consoled itself with the thought that Likud's victory would prove to be a temporary glitch, an aberration in an otherwise consistent pattern whose normal course would be resumed in the next election. In particular, the "second Israel," the so-called Sephardim who had emigrated not from Europe but from the Arab world and without whose help Likud could never have won, would recover from the state of false consciousness into which Begin's demagogy had thrown them. After a while, these people at the bottom of the heap would come to their senses and recognize that the only real hope for improving their lot lay with the Left.

But if the politicians of the old political establishment more or less made their peace with Begin and resolved to fight and win another day, the intellectuals were something else again. To them the accession of Begin represented more than a temporary and easily corrected political lapse. To them it meant that Israel, their country, the country that they and theirs had founded and developed and had a natural right to rule and run, was being stolen from them by a coalition between the forces of political darkness and the forces of cultural barbarism.

The cultural barbarism they had in mind was embodied in two overlapping groups, without which Likud could never have come to power: the Orthodox and the Sephardim. Now, there was nothing strange about the loathing felt by the overwhelmingly secular Israeli intellectual community for the Orthodox. But there was something very peculiar indeed about its hostility toward the Sephardim who, being concentrated at the lower end of the socioeconomic scale, might have been expected to enlist the sympathy of so overwhelmingly leftist a community. In this instance, however, the usual leftist requirements of social compassion gave way to the fear of being swamped by people whose level of cultural development seemed hopelessly primitive and whose undifferentiated hatred of the Arabs seemed nothing short of racist (a case here, perhaps—considering the intellectuals' own attitude toward the Sephardim—of the pot calling the kettle black).

"Because of that man," a prominent Israeli intellectual once said in an explosive capsule summary of the new place in which he found himself as a result of the coalition between Begin and the Sephardim, "I have to be ruled by *them*." In the country that was emerging out of this coalition, there was no comfortable place for people like him and his friends, and they no longer felt entirely at home.

Thus, for the first time, an alienated intellectual class made its appearance in Israel, bringing with it the usual stigmata of the adversary culture: the conviction that the social order was pervasively unjust, and the belief that one's own country was itself largely to blame for the enemies it had.

These ideas were, of course, suitably modified to fit the local conditions. For example, by their support of Begin (as well as by their hawkishness) the Sephardim were disqualified from being used as prime exhibits in the indictment of Israel as an unjust society; instead, that role was now filled by the Palestinians who had been living under Israeli occupation since 1967. This focus on the mistreatment of the Palestinians had the further advantage of giving greater plausibility to the notion that Israel rather than the Arabs was the main cause of the state of war that still existed between them.

In moving toward that view, however, and whether they intended it or not (some surely did, but others just as surely did not), the newly alienated intellectuals of Israel were playing directly into the hands of the latest twist in Arab strategy.

Originally, the Arab states had thought that military action would be enough to rid "their" region of the abomination that was Israel. But with the failure of conventional warfare, first in 1948, then again in 1967, and then yet again in 1973—and especially after Egypt broke ranks and removed itself as a belligerent through the Camp David agreement of 1978—the main emphasis shifted to unconventional warfare in the form of PLO terrorism.

This new military method offered no actual hope of victory, but the shift in political tactics that went with it was another matter entirely. Now, with the Palestinians replacing the Arab states as the central actors in the war against Israel, the truth about that war could be and was inverted. Instead of being about the right of a Jewish state to exist in the Middle East, it was now said to be about the right of the Palestinians to a state of their own (or rather a second state of their own, since Jordan already had a Palestinian majority).

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And instead of involving a tiny Israel (with a Jewish population of about three and a half million) pitted against twenty-one Arab nations with a combined population of about 180 million, it was now portrayed as a struggle between a "regional superpower" and an oppressed people yearning to be free.

MEANWHILE, back in America, the same inversion of the truth about the Arab-Israeli conflict had steadily been gaining momentum. Already as early as 1967, it had become obvious that a strong tide of hostility to Israel was beginning to sweep through the Left. Thus at a kind of ecumenical gathering of various leftist groups held that year in Chicago shortly after the Six-Day War, a number of resolutions were passed condemning Israel as racist and imperialist. Then, a few months later, one of the leading organizations in the civil-rights movement issued a leaflet in which Israel was represented as the proxy of American imperialism in the Middle East. In that same leaflet there was a caricature of Moshe Dayan dressed in a Nazi uniform and with dollar signs for eyes.

At first this identification of Israel with Nazi Germany made no impact outside the radical Left. The idea was so shocking and seemed so outlandish that, if anything, it probably did more damage to those who were spreading it than to Israel or to Zionism. But as the years went by the shock gradually wore off—so much so that by the time the Israelis invaded Lebanon in 1982 it was hard to find a liberal commentator who was *not* comparing them to the Nazis.

In general, Lebanon was to Israel what Vietnam had been to America. Just as Vietnam had served simultaneously to mobilize and to legitimize anti-American sentiment both at home and abroad, so Lebanon provided a respectable pretext for the open expression of the hostility to Israel that had been growing for at least a decade or more among Israeli intellectuals and American liberals alike.

For the many American Jews who had either failed or refused to notice that liberal sentiment had been souring on Israel, the response of the liberal media to Lebanon was nothing short of traumatic. Now, as never before, they were forced to experience the pains of dual loyalty—not, as in the classical model, between Israel and America, but between Israel and liberalism. The great majority of American Jews chose Israel, at least in the sense that they refused to join with the liberal pack in ganging up on Israel and blackening its name. But the majority, as usual, was silent and most of the noise emanating from the Jewish community came from the minority which chose liberalism over Israel.

Within this minority there were two distinct groups. The first was made up of 1967 and 1973 converts to the "religion" of Israel who now lapsed back into some form of their pre-conversion ideas and attitudes. This process did not involve a literal return to the old anti-Zionist or non-Zionist doctrines. That is, hardly anyone was yet prepared to say in so many words that the Zionist enterprise was proving to be a failure or that the price of Jewish statehood was turning out to be too high. Nor did these lapsing Jewish converts to Zionism go so far as to compare Israel to the Nazis. Nevertheless, it was clear that they were now attaching conditions to their commitment to the Jewish state. If it behaved in a way that accorded with liberal norms, they would be happy to go on supporting it; otherwise, count them out.

The second group that now chose liberalism over Israel consisted of long-time believers in the idea of a Jewish state who were growing disillusioned with the reality. This group was the American equivalent of the newly alienated Israeli intellectuals; and indeed, it forged a close alliance with them, acting both formally and informally as a kind of American branch of Israeli organizations like Peace Now. The condition attached by these people to their future commitment to Israel was a Palestinian state, although they were not yet ready to put it in such naked terms. The terms in which they did put it were that if Israel held on indefinitely to the West Bank and Gaza, it would in time either cease being Jewish or cease being democratic. In either case it would become the kind of country that they could no longer support.

The noise made by these two groups was greatly magnified in volume by the coverage they received in the media. By giving their spokesmen equal time with representatives of the majority, the stories in the papers and the debates on television talk shows created the impression that American Jews were now split down the middle. About half of them remained "knee-jerk" supporters of Israel and about half were so full of "anguish" over the terrible things Israel was now supposedly doing in Lebanon that they had overcome their usual scruples about criticizing it in public.

Although such stories rarely made it explicit, their real point was to persuade American politicians that greater friendliness toward the enemies of Israel had become much safer, that such friendliness would no longer necessarily entail getting into trouble with the Jews, that it might now even be popular with as many of them as it would enrage.

None of this was true. The truth was that, unlike the vocal minority, most American Jews were simply and unconditionally for Israel. They did not believe that they knew better than the Israelis themselves what was good for Israel. Anything the Israeli government considered necessary to the security of the state was all right with them, and if they felt uneasy about certain things, they were still willing to give Israel the benefit of every doubt. So far as they were concerned, Israel was under siege both militarily and ideologically, and

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it was up to them, as Jews, to defend it in any way they could, not to lend aid and comfort to Israel's enemies by criticizing it in public.

This position worked well for those who held it so long as there was an Israeli government to which they could defer. But with the formation of the "national unity" government in 1984, a mixed message began coming out of Jerusalem which left the silent majority of American Jews confused and made it difficult for them to ascertain what, exactly, they were now supposed to support. To be sure, the two parties in the Israeli government were united in their opposition to a Palestinian state, especially one ruled by the PLO. But the Labor party, led by Shimon Peres, was convinced that continued occupation of the West Bank and Gaza represented a greater threat to Israel's survival than withdrawal, while Likud, now led by Yitzhak Shamir, was no less strongly convinced of the opposite. And if Israel's leaders were unable to agree on what the security of their country required, how could the Jews of America be expected to know?

All these tendencies and the problems they created were brought to a head by the Palestinian uprising in Gaza and the West Bank, the so-called *intifada*, that broke out toward the end of 1987. Properly understood, this uprising represented the opening of a third phase in the Arab war against Israel. Now, instead of troops and tanks and planes, the Arabs resorted to stones and Molotov cocktails; and instead of dispatching trained operatives to murder Jewish civilians, they sent young Palestinians into the streets of Gaza and the West Bank against Israeli soldiers.

It was an enormously effective tactic, and it had the intended result of shifting the balance of sympathy among liberals decisively to the side of the Palestinians and against the Israelis. But not only did the *intifada* intensify liberal opposition to Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza; it also created a groundswell of liberal support for the establishment of a Palestinian state in those territories. And even though everyone said that the uprising owed little or nothing to the PLO, it was widely assumed that the PLO would—and should—become the dominant element in the new Palestinian state.

Within Israel, there was still very little open or outright support for a Palestinian state of any kind, and certainly not one under the domination of forces committed as the PLO was to the destruction of the Jewish state. Likud's answer to the *intifada* was to repress it by force and then (as envisaged in the Camp David agreement) to negotiate some form of autonomy with the Palestinians living in the territories while maintaining Israeli control over the territories themselves. The Labor party, which favored withdrawal under the formula of trading "territory for peace," continued to insist that Jordan would eventually become Israel's partner in such a trade. But the "Jordanian option" disappeared in the summer of 1988 when King Hussein renounced his claim to the West Bank, leaving Labor with no credible alternative to Israeli occupation other than a PLO state (which, however, it still opposed).

Since neither continued occupation nor withdrawal held out a firm promise of peace and security, and since the arguments against both seemed more or less equally compelling, the people of Israel were quite naturally divided. In the election of 1988, therefore, neither of the two major parties was able to win a decisive majority. Once again Israel ended up with a "national unity" government that was even less united than before on what to do about the occupied territories.

It was roughly at this point that Yasir Arafat finally fulfilled the American conditions for a "dialogue" by recognizing Israel and renouncing terrorism. He also indicated that he was willing to give up the dream of taking over the whole of Palestine and to settle for a state on the West Bank and Gaza that would live in peace side by side with Israel.

Now the real testing of the Jewish people began. When Benjamin Franklin was asked after the Constitutional Convention of 1787 what it had given to the American people, he replied, "A republic, if you can keep it." Just so, in 1948 the Jewish people, for the first time in two thousand years, were given a state—if they could keep it. In the beginning, the main thing they had to do to keep it was turn themselves into a nation of brave and effective soldiers; and this they did, in dramatic defiance of an old stereotype according to which Jews did not like to fight and were no good at it. Gershom Scholem, perhaps the greatest Jewish scholar of the age and a "cultural" Zionist of the old school with decidedly pacifist leanings, was once asked whether he would ever have anticipated that the most brilliant institution of a reconstituted Jewish state would turn out to be its army rather than, say, its universities. Well, he answered with a rueful shrug, the Jews are a talented people and talent goes where it is needed. So long as Israel remained under siege, the army would have to be at the very center of its national existence.

For Jews living outside the Jewish state, what was needed to keep it was a different kind of talent, and one for which Jews might have been stereotypically considered very well suited. This was the talent to defend Israel in the realm of ideas and ideologies against the attacks on its legitimacy as a state and on its correlative right to do the things that all states are automatically granted the right to do in the exercise of their sovereignty or in the ensuring of their security.

If it had not been obvious before 1975, when the United Nations General Assembly passed the resolution condemning Zion-

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ism as a form of racism, it should have become obvious by then that there was a large component of anti-Semitism in the denial to Israel of this right to conduct itself in accordance with universally accepted norms and practices. Banished in the immediate aftermath of the Holocaust from domestic society in the countries where once it flourished, anti-Semitism had been given a new lease on life by the reappearance after so many centuries of a Jewish state in the world. Thus the technique of applying double standards to individual Jews or to the Jews as a minority group was now extended to the Jewish state, with the result that Israel was condemned for actions that were regarded as justified or even praiseworthy when practiced by all other states.

For example, for exercising the right of national self-determination, the Jews of Israel were accused of the crimes of racism and imperialism. For defending themselves against armed attack, they were accused of the crime of aggression. And for holding onto territories conquered in the course of a war launched against them with the stated purpose of wiping their country off the map, they were accused of violating international law. Indeed, of all the millions of square miles of territory conquered through aggression by various nations since 1945 alone, only those taken by Israel in a war of self-defense were expected to be returned. "It is natural enough," said J. William Fulbright, who was chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee at the time of the Six-Day War, "for Israel to resist the honor of being the first modern military victor to be obliged to abide by the principles and specifications of the United Nations Charter, especially when the greater powers who dominate the Security Council have set such a wretched example. Be that as it may, the principle is too important to be cast away because of the hypocrisy or self-interest of its proponents." In other words, as one commentator sardonically remarked, "all the self-interested hypocrites have a right to ask of Israel what they would not dream of doing themselves."

The mere fact that Israel was a Jewish state would in any case and under any circumstances have exerted a pull on the Jews of America. But the additional fact that Israel was in danger precisely *because* it was a Jewish state vastly increased the obligation felt by the Jews of America to support and defend it in any way they could. This component of anti-Semitism in the hostility toward Israel, moreover, made it easier for them to be staunch through the first two phases in the Arab war against the Jewish state—the phase of conventional military attack and the phase of PLO terrorism. And it was the brazenness with which the anti-Semitic component showed itself during the Lebanon war that kept most American Jews defiantly staunch even when liberal opinion was overwhelmingly lined up against Israel.

Yet not even the blatant presence of anti-Semitism in the campaign against Israel could prevent the weakening of American Jewish resolve in the face of the *intifada*. The barbarically brilliant new tactic of pitting children armed with rocks against soldiers armed with guns took the heart out of the Jews of America. They could not figure out how to mount an effective defense of Israel, any more than the Israelis themselves could figure out how to respond effectively to a form of warfare for which they were totally unprepared, either militarily or spiritually.

Not surprisingly, some American Jews now turned against Israel. Some even went to the incredible length of embracing Yasir Arafat—an act for which those of us who make up the crippled remnant of the Jewish people that has survived the catastrophe will never forgive them. But most American Jews did not actually turn against Israel. Deep down they understood very well that the Israelis were in an impossible situation, a trap from which there was no obvious or immediate escape. But they yearned for the Israelis to do something, anything, that would make Israel look good again in liberal eyes, or at least less bad.

Being good American liberals themselves, they had no ground in principle by which to justify indefinite Israeli rule over a rebellious Palestinian population. Nor could they answer the contention that continued Israeli occupation of the territories would ultimately erode the Jewishness of the state or transform it from a democracy into another South Africa. The only argument they could rely on was security: the argument that Israeli withdrawal in favor of a Palestinian state run by the PLO posed so great a danger to the "body" of Israel that, for the time being and for the foreseeable future, it had to take precedence over the danger to Israel's "soul" admittedly posed by continued occupation.

Yet even this argument was undermined by two developments that flowed from the *intifada*. One was the insistence by nearly all of the most vocal Israeli intellectuals, now reinforced by many politicians and a number of retired military men, that Israel was strong enough to handle a PLO state. (Among the most vociferous and energetic of these doves now advocating Israeli withdrawal to the '67 borders was a famous figure who had once called those very lines "the borders of Auschwitz.") The other new development was Arafat's announcement that he was willing to accept a "two-state solution" and to live in peace with an Israel whose revised boundaries would be determined by negotiation.

When Arafat first made this announcement, the United States felt obligated to enter into a "dialogue" with him. But the United States did not immediately abandon its longstanding opposition to a Palestinian state. Instead Washington reaffirmed its belief that the best solution would be

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Israeli withdrawal to the '67 borders (with minor modifications) and the establishment in the territories of some sort of federation between Jordan and an autonomous Palestinian entity. Yet this scheme, which had always seemed difficult to envisage, was now altogether academic as a result of Hussein's renunciation of any claim to the West Bank and Arafat's expressed willingness to recognize and coexist peacefully with Israel.

It was therefore clear from the start of the U.S. dialogue with Arafat that it was likely to lead, and sooner rather than later, to an American endorsement of a PLO state. It was also clear by now that only the most determined resistance by the Jews of Israel, backed with equal determination by the Jews of America, could pose a serious obstacle to this change in policy and the inexorable pressures on Israel that would go with it. But both Jewish communities, each in its own way, were war-weary, internally divided, and isolated, and they could not bring themselves to do what many of them in their demoralized condition no longer even seemed to realize was necessary to the survival of Israel.

Under these circumstances, Israeli withdrawal in favor of a new PLO state became inevitable—so much so that the details of the diplomatic maneuvering preceding it were more for show than anything else. Certainly, to us, the remnant, thinking about these details is unbearably painful since it compels us to remember how many of our fellow Jews encouraged the process and how few of us resisted it.

For just as Jews led the way in opening the U.S. dialogue with Arafat back in 1988, so Jews, both in America and Israel, were later in the forefront of those who soothingly maintained that the Arab world really had given up on its evil dream of wiping Israel off the map, and that Israel's security would accordingly be enhanced, not jeopardized, by a PLO state. And it was Jews, again both in America and Israel, who also took the lead in deriding the argument that a PLO state would mean not peace but war. Indeed, no one scoffed more contemptuously than these Jewish pursuers of peace at the idea that a more militarily vulnerable Israel might well lose such a war, along with its national existence, to a strengthened combination of Arab armies brought together by the scent of Israeli weakness and undeterred by any international promises and guarantees.

Now that this has actually come to pass and another Jewish community has been destroyed for the crime of being Jewish, we, the remnant, recognize full well that the blood of complicity is on the hands of almost everyone in the world—on the Left but also on the Right and in the Center; in the international organizations and in the foreign ministries; in the foundations and in the media; in the churches and in the universities. All of them, all—whether out of naive good will or malign or anti-Semitic intent—joined together in hectoring and harassing Israel into making mortally dangerous concessions.

But what torments us the most is the sight of the blood of complicity on our own Jewish hands. For the question it drills into our heads, giving us no rest either by day or by night, is whether a unified Jewish front of moral and ideological defense of Israel, and a correlatively unified front of resistance to the establishment of a PLO state, would have been enough to prevent the worst. The Talmud holds that the Second Temple was destroyed because of dissension among the Jews. Looking back at the period between the outbreak of the *intifada* and the birth of the PLO state, many of us have become convinced that dissension among the Jews also played a central part in the destruction of Israel. Which is to say that in retrospect it seems agonizingly obvious that a unified Jewish effort *could* have succeeded, even though the forces arrayed against Israel and in favor of a PLO state were so very strong. But never really having tried, we can never really know.

One thing, however, we can and do know. If, in the crucial phase of the war against the Jewish state that began with the *intifada*, we had submitted ourselves to the discomfort of defending Israel wholeheartedly in the realm of ideas; and if we had subsequently resisted the formation of a PLO state with all our vaunted cleverness and all our political might and main; and if, in spite of having summoned so much moral and intellectual courage, we had nevertheless failed—well, then, at least we would not have been left with this burden of shame and self-disgust that is undermining our will to go on as Jews and that is dragging the glorious history of our ancient people toward an ignominious end. At least we would have emerged with enough pride to carry Jewish existence forward, and enough self-respect to keep a critically wounded people alive.

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On Not Being a Dove

John Updike

In the summer of 1966 on Martha's Vineyard, where the mail was rendered sticky and soft by the damp salt air, as if permeated by a melting island unreality, I received a questionnaire from some British editors asking—in the manner of a book compiled, thirty years before, of opinions on the Spanish Civil War—"Are you for, or against, the intervention of the United States in Vietnam?" and "How, in your opinion, should the conflict in Vietnam be resolved?" Had the questions arrived on the mainland, where I had so much else to do, I would probably have left them unanswered: but in the mood of islanded leisure and seclusion that I had come to afford I sat down at my makeshift desk and typed out, with some irritation, this response:

> Like most Americans I am uncomfortable about our military adventure in South Vietnam; but in honesty I wonder how much of the discomfort has to do with its high cost, in lives and money, and how much with its moral legitimacy. I do not believe that the Vietcong and Ho Chi Minh have a moral edge over us, nor do I believe that great powers can always avoid using their power. I am for our intervention if it does some good—specifically, if it enables the people of South Vietnam to seek their own political future. It is absurd to suggest that a village in the grip of guerrillas has freely chosen, or that we owe it to history to bow before a wave of the future engineered by terrorists. The crying need is for genuine elections whereby the South Vietnamese can express their will. If their will is for Communism, we should pick up our chips and leave. Until such a will is expressed, and as long as no willingness to negotiate is shown by the other side, I do not see that we can abdicate our burdensome position in South Vietnam.

My discomfort increased when the New York *Times*, in a story covering the publication of *Authors Take Sides on Vietnam* in England, gave my impromptu response a prominence it never hoped to have. I wrote this letter to the editor:

I discover myself named, in the *Times* of September 18, as the lone American writer "unequivocally for" the United States intervention in Vietnam. How could anyone not be at least equivocal about an action so costly, so cruel in its details, so indecisive in its results? My statement, given in answer to an English questionnaire in August of 1966, says, "I am for our intervention if it does some good—specifically, if it enables the people of South Vietnam to seek their own political future." In the year that has passed, reasons accumulate to doubt that it is doing enough good. The bombing of the North seems futile as well as brutal and should be stopped. Our massive military presence may be crushing the South Vietnamese initiative it is supposed to encourage. The abundance of terror and coercion on all sides, as far as an American newspaper reader can tell, severely diminishes the significance of that trusted instrument, popular election. No doubt the history of our involvement in this land includes unscrupulousness and stupidity; no doubt the Vietcong feeds upon actual discontent and injustice. I suspect the point is approaching, as for Spain in 1939, when peace at any price, even under a tyranny, is preferable to a continuing struggle. These—presented with consciousness of ignorance, by one too old for military service, and whose sons are too young—are my present feelings: these, plus the, I think, general dismay at the huge waste of material resources, the growing cost in lives, and the unaccountable influence of our party politics upon decisions vindicated in human blood.

I differ, perhaps, from my unanimously dovish confrères in crediting the Johnson administration with good faith and some good sense. Anyone not a rigorous pacifist must at least consider the argument that this war, evil as it is, is the lesser of available evils, intended to forestall worse wars. I am not sure that this is true, but I assume that this is the reasoning of those who prosecute it, rather than the maintenance of business prosperity or the President's crazed stubbornness. I feel in the dove arguments as presented to me too much aesthetic distaste for the President, even when not lifted to the paranoid heights of *MacBird;* even the best of the negative accounts of our operations in South Vietnam, such as Mary McCarthy's vivid reports or Jonathan Schell's account of the destruction of Ben Suc, too much rely upon satirical descriptions of American officers and the grotes-

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John Updike, the novelist and critic, has written 35 books and has won both the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award. The present article has been adapted from his forthcoming memoir, *Self-Consciousness,* which will be published by Knopf later this month. Copyright © 1989 by John Updike.

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queries of cultural superimposition. The protest seems too reflexive, too Pop; I find the statements, printed with mine, of Jules Feiffer and Norman Mailer, frivolous. Like W.H. Auden, I would hope, the sooner the better, for a "negotiated peace, to which the Vietcong will have to be a party," and, like him, feel that it is foolish to canvass writers upon political issues. Not only do our views, as he says, "have no more authority than those of any reasonably well-educated citizen," but in my own case at least I feel my professional need for freedom of speech and expression prejudices me toward a government whose constitution guarantees it. I recognize that what to me is essential may well be, to a peasant on the verge of starvation, an abstract luxury.

My letter, long as it seems, actually went on for another page, which the *Times* cut, and in which I said, my wheels beginning to spin, that "I would enjoy being released from the responsibility of having an opinion on the Vietnam involvement" and "indeed, I would be glad to be freed of all the duties of living in a powerful modern state—while continuing to accept, of course, the benefits," but that "I cannot pretend to believe, though it would be convenient to do so, that our unilateral withdrawal from South Vietnam would serve the national interest or the cause of peace." I even had a concrete proposal:

> My one concrete proposal would be that President Johnson decline to run in 1968. That as a last service he terminate his life of valued service to the country, including five years in its highest office. Then, under a new President, of either party, insofar as our role in South Vietnam is the inevitable product of our world position, it will continue; insofar as it is the special result of self-perpetuating mistakes of the present leadership, it should cease.

To dip into *Authors Take Sides on Vietnam* is to inhale the poisonous vapors of a murky and quarrelsome time. The responses by Mailer and Feiffer that I found frivolous run, in part, "The truth is, maybe we need a war. It may be the last of the tonics. From Lydia Pinkham to Vietnam in sixty years, or bust" (Mailer), and "The solution to the problem is so simple I'm amazed it hasn't occurred to anyone else. Lyndon Johnson should go on nationwide TV and say to the American people, 'Ah have goofed'" (Feiffer). I did not notice, twenty years ago, this gem of a cheering thought by James Purdy: "Vietnam is atrocious for the dead and maimed innocent, but it's probably sadder to be a live American with only the Madison Avenue glibbers for a homeland and a God."

The *Times* to the contrary, I was not the only non-dove: James Michener, an old Asia hand, gave a lengthy geopolitical explanation, ranging from Thailand to Australia, as to why "I am driven by experience of the past and concern for the future to support my government's stand in Vietnam," and Marianne Moore in typical cadence responded, "It is short-sightedly irresponsible, I think, to permit Communist domination and acquiesce in the crushing of the weak by the strong. Can negotiation be imposed by force? Winston Churchill thought appeasement solved nothing." W.H. Auden wrote, sensibly as always:

> It goes without saying that war is an atrocious corrupting business, but it is dishonest of those who demand the immediate withdrawal of all American troops to pretend that their motives are purely humanitarian. They believe, rightly or wrongly, that it would be better if the Communists won. My answer to your question is, I suppose, that I believe a negotiated peace, to which the Vietcong will have to be a party, to be possible, but not yet, and that, therefore, American troops, alas, must stay in Vietnam until it is.

There was a great deal of discussion, in those pages from 1966, of the global threat posed by China, and of the Vietcong: who could have foreseen that the Vietcong, what was left of it after the Tet offensive, would be brusquely ignored by the North Vietnamese in their successful conquest of the South, or that China would become an uneasy friend of the United States and an enemy of the consolidated, militant Vietnamese nation?

My apologetic letter to the *Times*—blaming myself, as contritely as a victim of the Red Guards, for caring about freedom of speech—ended my public pronouncements on Vietnam. My usefulness as a sometime editorialist in the *New Yorker*'s "Talk of the Town" came to an end some months later, with a brief "Notes and Comment" on President Johnson's surprise announcement in late March of 1968 that—just as I had proposed—he would not run again. My little piece praised his decision as

> a victory of imagination, for in one stroke he has added credibility to his search for peace, heightened the dignity of his office for the remainder of his term, and compelled the United States to take its electoral process seriously. The political stage, without him, seems rather thinly populated; and in the matter of Vietnam, the real alternatives may be more confining than we had imagined. Yet fresh opportunity and option have been created, and we can only be grateful for this unexpected gift.

In a last-minute discussion, over the telephone, with the editor concerned, the part of the penultimate sentence following the semicolon was cut. "We can't go saying he might have been right after all" was the argument; I acquiesced—after all, these anonymous pieces spoke for the magazine, not me—and henceforth left "Notes and Comment" to other, more leftish, hands.

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IT PAINED and embarrassed me to be out of step with my magazine and literary colleagues, with the bronzed and almost universally "antiwar" summer denizens of Martha's Vineyard (including Feiffer and the fiery Lillian Hellman), and with many of my dearest friends back home in Ipswich, including my wife. How had I come to such an awkward pass? In politics, my instinct had always been merely to stay out of harm's way. My home town of Shillington, Pennsylvania, was peaceably shared by both parties, and by honorable double inheritance I was a Democrat: my father, raised as a Republican, had become a Roosevelt Democrat when thrown out of work at the outset of the Depression, and my grandfather Hoyer was a kind of Jacksonian Democrat, rooted deep in the dark soil of old Pennsylvania politics, with its passion over tariffs and agrarianism. In his comfortable orotund manner Pop Hoyer would speak of the "business interests" and the "financiers" that occupied the sinister urban territory—steamy, malodorous Philadelphia and unspeakable New York—beyond Berks County's rural idyll. Nearby Reading had a Socialist mayor when I was a boy, and its society was pretty much divided between those who owned the factories and those who worked in them. The mill owners, in their Wyomissing mansions and behind their iron fences in Heidelberg Township, were legendary figures, inaccessible ogres of wealth in my small-town boy's sense of things, scarcely less grand and remote than Pittsburgh multimillionaires like the Andrews, Carnegie and Mellon, whose names meant as reverently much to my father as those of rock stars do to a contemporary teenager. Elsewhere, in the miles of tight row houses that composed the bulk of Reading and its suburbs, lived the rest of us—"the people."

I was comfortable with being a Democrat. In my piping stammering voice I defended Roosevelt and Eleanor and Henry Wallace against my Republican peers at the elementary school, much as I competed in recess-time soccer tussles of the A's against the B's, or enlisted in the Philadelphia Avenue troops in mock-battles against the Second Streeters. A war was going on, and political differences, however shrill, were submerged in our common identity as young Americans doing our bit to withstand and defeat Hitler and Mussolini and Hirohito. The Republican party was understood to be that of the rich, or those small businessmen who, like our local barber Artie Hoyer, somehow identified with the rich; whereas the Democratic party was that of the common man, of the unrich. When I went to Harvard, my being a Democrat fit nicely into the liberal strain of establishment and undergraduate thinking: I sat in the Lowell House common room amidst a sardonic crowd loudly watching Nixon's televised Checkers speech (that strained piety! that lugubrious appeal to Pat's "good Republican cloth coat"!) and with my Unitarian, tennis-sneakered, pony-tailed girlfriend carried placards for Stevenson in front of a Cambridge polling place in 1952. There was a small scarcely noticed difference, however, between the Harvard-Radcliffe Democrats and myself which was to emerge in the Vietnam years: they, Unitarian or Episcopalian or Jewish, supported Roosevelt and Truman and Stevenson out of enlightenment, *de haut en bas*, whereas in my heart of hearts, I, however veneered with an education and button-down shirts, was *de bas*. They, secure in the upper-middle class, were Democrats out of human sympathy and humanitarian largesse, because this was the party that helped the poor. Our family had simply *been* poor, and voted Democrat out of crude self-interest.

I FIRST voted, pulling the Democrat lever, in New York City, in 1956; naively I thought Stevenson might actually beat Ike this second time around. In 1960, transposed to Massachusetts, I was happy to vote with most of my fellow Bay Staters for our young native son, Jack Kennedy. And in 1964 I went to considerable trouble to vote inside the Soviet Union, casting at the American embassy in Moscow my absentee ballot for Lyndon Johnson and against that warmonger Barry Goldwater; my peaceloving Russian hosts were as relieved as I at the Johnson landslide. One source of my sense of grievance against the peace movement when it came was that I hadn't voted for any of its figures—not for Abbie Hoffman or Father Daniel Berrigan or Reverend William Sloane Coffin or Jonathan Schell or Lillian Hellman or Joan Baez or Jane Fonda or Jerry Rubin or Doctor Spock or Eugene McCarthy. I had voted for Lyndon Johnson, and thus had earned my American right not to make a political decision for another four years. If he and his advisers (transferred intact, most of them, from Kennedy's Camelot) had somehow got us into this mess, they would somehow get us out, and it was a citizen's plain duty to hold his breath and hope for the best, not parade around full of pious unction and crocodile tears and power hunger and supercilious rage.

The protest, from my perspective, was in large part a snobbish dismissal of Johnson by the Eastern establishment; Cambridge professors and Manhattan lawyers and their guitar-strumming children thought they could run the country and the world better than this lugubrious bohunk from Texas. These privileged members of a privileged nation believed that their pleasant position could be maintained without anything visibly ugly happening in the world. They were full of aesthetic disdain for their own defenders, the business-suited hirelings drearily pondering geopolitics and its bloody necessities down in Washington. The protesters were spitting on the cops who were trying to keep their property—the USA and its

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many amenities—intact. A common report in this riotous era was of slum-dwellers throwing rocks and bottles at the firemen come to put out fires; the peace marchers, the upper-middle-class housewives pushing baby carriages along in candlelit processions, seemed to me to be behaving identically, without the excuse of being slum-dwellers.

It was hard to explain my indignation, even to myself. The peace movement's predecessor and progenitor, the civil-rights movement, had posed no emotional problem. I had been proud, really, of my wife's going off to march in Selma, coming back with sore feet and a slight tan and stories of transracial sexual overtures (rebuffed, I was assured). Feverish with a cold, I marched with her in a large, singing, well-meaning crowd from Roxbury to the Boston Common one raw damp day, braving pneumonia in the process, and we were charter members of the local Fair Housing Committee, founded on the rumor that a black family had been finagled out of an Ipswich house they were on the verge of buying. I went to meetings and contributed to the NAACP and even lent a black we slightly knew some money that he never repaid—I was all for people getting a break, if the expense to me wasn't inordinate.

By my mid-thirties, cunningly combining diligence and daring, I had arrived at a lifestyle we might call genteel bohemian: nice old house (broad floorboards, big fireplaces) rather diffidently furnished (Danish modern always coming unglued, Design Research sofa in need of cleaning, five-and-dime kitchenware, a smattering of auction antiques), walls occupied by semi-abstract canvases painted by the Mrs. and pine bookshelves hammered together by the Mr., scruffy backyard (uninhibited forsythia hedge, a rope swing hung from a dying elm, bare spots in the rough shape of a baseball diamond), four dusty but healthy children with Sunday bests at the backs of their closets, two cars, one of them a convertible, and, for dinner, lots of rice casseroles and California wine. To me, this was prosperity.

At moments of suburban relaxation, in our circle of semi-bohemian homes, we smoked pot, wore dashikis and love beads, and frugged ourselves into a lather while the Beatles and Janis Joplin sang away on the hi-fi set. I was happy enough to lick the sugar of the counterculture; it was the pill of antiwar, anti-administration, "anti-imperialist" protest that I found oddly bitter. I was, perhaps, the most Vietnam-minded person I knew. Those who deplored the war fit what protesting they could into their suburban schedules and otherwise dismissed it with a gesture of automatic distaste; the technocrats of our acquaintance, the electronic engineers and stockbrokers and economics professors, tended to see the involvement as an administrative blunder, to which they could attach no passion. But I—I whose stock in trade as an American author included an intuition into the mass consciousness and an identification with our national fortunes—felt obliged to defend Johnson and Rusk and Rostow, and then Nixon and Kissinger, as they maneuvered, with many a solemn bluff and thunderous air raid, our quagmirish involvement and long extrication. My face would become hot, my voice high and tense and wildly stuttery; I could feel my heart race in a kind of panic whenever the subject came up, and my excitement threatened to suffocate me.

Of all the contending parties with which it might have been possible to sympathize—the Vietcong in their tunnels, fighting off bombers with punji stakes; the North Vietnamese and the old Vietminh, condemned to fight war after war; Ho Chi Minh, with his innocent, lifted-eyebrows expression and saintly white goatee; the napalmed children; the defoliated trees and poisoned rice paddies; the self-immolating Buddhist monks; the American soldiers, derided and mocked at home and surrounded by inscrutable, implacably hostile villagers in Vietnam—I felt compelled to identify with the American administrations and to a lesser extent with those South Vietnamese, from Diem and Ky and Thieu down to the village chiefs buried alive and otherwise gruesomely assassinated, who were trying to run a non-Communist country. Gorge-deep principles of fairness and order were at issue; it greatly distressed me, for example—it wasn't *fair*—that American liberals could so blithely disown what was clearly a typically and historically liberal cause, foreign intervention against a Communist bully. Carl Oglesby, addressing the SDS at a Washington rally in 1965, said it clearly:

> The original commitment in Vietnam was made by President Truman, a mainstream liberal. It was seconded by President Eisenhower, a moderate liberal. It was intensified by the late President Kennedy, a flaming liberal. Think of the men who now engineer the war—those who study the maps, give the commands, push the buttons and tally the dead: Bundy, McNamara, Lodge, Goldberg, and the President himself. They are not moral monsters. They are all honorable men. They are all liberals.

I was a liberal. Democrats, not Republicans, got us into wars, to make the world a better place, a place more like America. If we approved of Roosevelt's nudging us toward World War II, and of Truman's bouncing us into Korea one impetuous Sunday, why were we turning up our noses at Vietnam? What was Vietnam but Korea again, Korea without an overt invasion, without a UN resolution, and without a Syngman Rhee, but all the more honorable a cause for its added difficulties? Were the people in the State Department utterly stupid to think we shouldn't let Southeast Asia go down the drain? Were we really secure enough—high and mighty and smug enough—

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to become a pacifist nation? "You don't get something for nothing," my father, a schoolteacher, would frequently say. If there was one lesson my upbringing had instilled it was our earthly insecurity: a Depression, a disease, a swindler smarter than we can come along and take everything from us. My father was a patriot: he had been ready in 1918 to board a troop ship in World War I; he had been Uncle Sam in the victory parade after World War II; when McCarthyism had imposed a loyalty oath on public-school teachers in Pennsylvania, he had taken it without demur. I must have questioned him about it, for I remember his saying mildly that he had no trouble swearing that he was loyal to the United States. He was loyal, and so was I. I would rather live under Diem (or Ky, or Thieu) than under Ho Chi Minh and his enforcers, and assumed that most South Vietnamese would. Those who would not, let them move North. But the foot traffic, one could not help noticing in these Communist/non-Communist partitions, was South, or West, away from Communism. Why was that? And so on.

I wanted to keep quiet, but could not. Something about it all made me very sore. I spoke up, blushing and hating my disruption of a post-liberal socioeconomic-cultural harmony I was pleased to be a part of. I recall the puzzled expression on the face of my Vineyard acquaintance Philip Roth (on the dizzying verge of publishing *Portnoy's Complaint*) as I argued on, defending poor Johnson and his pitiful ineffective war machine. In my mind I was beset, defending an underdog, my back to the wall in a world of rabid anti-establishment militants. At one point Roth, in the calm and courteous tone of one who had been through many psychiatric sessions, pointed out to me that I was the most aggressive person in the room. It gave me pause. On reflection, it seemed possibly true. Why *was* I so vehement and agitated an undove? I did not just have a few cool reservations about the antiwar movement; I felt hot. I was emotionally involved. "Defending Vietnam"—the vernacular opposite of being "antiwar"—I was defending myself.

My wife of those years offered an interesting idea: that Johnson was a former schoolteacher and I identified him with my father, whose inability to maintain classroom order had been a central trauma of my growing up in Shillington, a childish cause for fear and pity. For three years, from seventh grade to ninth, I had been one of my father's students and had been torn by the wish to be a loyal son and the itch to be a popularity-seeking cutup. In my anxious dreams about him—naked but for a barrel, pelted and hooted on the steps of the town hall—things had "gotten away" from him, much as the country had gotten away from Johnson. The protest movement, which had begun in the solemn 50's-ish pronouncements of the Port Huron Statement and the orderly civil-rights strategies, by the time of the '67 Washington march and the '68 convention had become a Yippieish carnival of mischievous voodoo and street theater and, finally, a nightmare of anarchy, of window-smashing and cop-bopping and drug-tripping and shouting down. The shouting-down part of it, the totalitarian intolerance and savagery epitomized by the Weathermen,* but to some extent adopted by student radicals everywhere, especially alarmed me. Authority to these young people was Amerika, a bloodstained bugaboo to be crushed at any cost. To me, authority was the Shillington High School faculty, my father and his kindly and friendly, rather wan and punctilious colleagues, with whose problems and perspective I had had every opportunity to empathize. I had overheard their plaintive, patient conversations in the hall when the thundering hordes of unruly students had left; I was allowed to visit the boiler room, and see the male teachers at ease in their shirtsleeves, smoking and joking while the janitors lounged at their workbench and the great boilers roared and chugged down another giant gulp of pea coal. Authority to me was Woody Coldren, the superintendent of the Lutheran Sunday School and eventually town burgess, loudly leading us children in the singing of carols on Christmas morning in front of the blank screen of the Shillington movie theater. It was the three town cops, in their comically different sizes. Such were the village elders whom I visualized tortured and executed by the Vietcong, to show us peasants that the only possible social order was theirs.

Yet there was another side to it. Hadn't "the system," in losing my grandfather his money and my father his job, let us down just as I was being born? My mother, who had walked out of a classroom where she had been stationed as a student teacher, had with this gesture rejected the place the system offered her, and in her eccentricity—her private revolution—showed me the gravitational pull of other systems, more far-fetched possibilities. The town authorities, and all the hard-working churchgoing burghers of Shillington, struck me as unenviable and not to be emulated. At heart I scorned them. Who would want to be a Thirty-second-degree Mason, or the top Oddfellow? Who, by extension, would want to be President of the United States? And my Harvard education, acquired in the mauve afternoon of modernism, amid Eliotic shades of irony and fastidious ennui, strengthened my impression that political concern was vapid and played small part in the civilized life. That, perhaps, was what angered me most about Vietnam; it made it im-

* For years I carried in my wallet, like a fortune-cookie slip somehow more than amusing, a statement from the underground Weathermen: "We are against everything that's good and decent in honky America. We will loot, burn, and destroy. We are the incubation of your mother's nightmare."

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possible to ignore politics, to cultivate serenely my garden of private life and printed artifact. These butterfingered Washington fat cats in their three-hundred-dollar suits had dropped us all into a mess of blood and shame and frustration and embarrassment, and here I was, stuck with defending them.

Was I conservative? I hadn't thought so, but I did come from what I could begin to see was a conservative part of the country. Conservative in dress, in mores, in attitudes. The Germans of Berks County didn't move on, like the typical Scots-Irish frontier-seeking American. They stayed put, farming the same valleys and being buried in the same graveyards, one generation after another. Before the Germans came to Southeastern Pennsylvania, there had been the Quakers, and these, too, were conservative, thrifty, accumulative, suspicious of all but inner revolutions. The cautious spirit of Ben Franklin's maxims still lived in the air. A penny saved is a penny earned; willful waste makes woeful want; a fool and his money are soon parted: my grandfather quoted these often, as inherited wisdom to be passed on. My father's bitter economic experience supplied some darker maxims. Another day, another dollar. Dog eat dog. You don't get something for nothing. I had been reared in the static, defensive world of the Depression, to which the world war added a coloring of embattlement and patriotic pride.

At the height of the Vietnam troubles, in the late 60's, my wife and children in loving exasperation gave me for Christmas a large American flag. I was, as an American Protestant, the beneficiary of a number of revolts—Luther's, which dumped the Pope; Cromwell's, which dumped the monarchy; and Sam Adams's, which dumped the British—and saw no need for any more. I was, furthermore, a Christian, and Christ said, "Render under Caesar those things which are Caesar's." I was, by upbringing, a Lutheran, and Luther had told the "murdering and thieving hordes"(*"die räuberishchen und mörderischen Rotten"*) of rebellious peasants to cease their radical turmoil and submit to their Christian princes. Faith alone, faith without any false support of works, justified the Lutheran believer and distinguished him from the Catholic and Calvinist believer. In all varieties of Christian faith resides a certain contempt for the world and for attempts to locate salvation and perfection here. The world is fallen, and in a fallen world animals, men, and nations make space for themselves through a willingness to fight. Christ beat up the money-changers in the temple, and came not to bring peace, he distinctly said, but a sword.

My thoughts ran as follows. Peace depends upon the threat of violence. The threat cannot always be idle. Privately and in the aggregate, we walk through life with chips on our shoulder, and when the chip is knocked off, we must fight. "You *must* fight," none other than a Russian had told me, in late 1964, in the Soviet Union, concerning Vietnam. Ho Chi Minh had knocked off our shoulder the chip that Dulles and Eisenhower and the SEATO treaty had placed there. We had tried to subvert the North, we had tried to train and arm ARVN so it could defend the South, and neither had worked. We had to fight, though it meant pitting ourselves, with our white faces, against the other guy's nationalism, halfway around the world, and picking up all the bad checks the French had scattered about in a century of conspicuously ruthless colonialism. It was all very well for civilized little countries like Sweden and Canada to tut-tut in the shade of our nuclear umbrella and welcome our deserters and draft evaders, but the United States had nobody to hide behind. Credibility must be maintained. Power is a dirty business, but who ever said it wasn't? In the Bhagavad-Gita, Krishna told Arjuna, "Therefore you must fight. . . . Freedom from activity is never achieved by abstaining from action. . . . The world is imprisoned in its own activity, except when actions are performed as worship of God." The Vietnam war—or *any* war—is "wrong," but in the sense that existence itself is wrong. To be alive is to be a killer; and though the Jains try to hide this by wearing gauze masks to avoid inhaling insects, and the antiabortionists by picketing hospitals, and peace activists by lying down in front of ammunition trains, there is really no hiding what every meal we eat juicily demonstrates. Peace is not something we are entitled to but an illusory respite we earn. On both the personal and national level, islands of truce created by balances of terror and potential violence are the best we can hope for. Pacifism is a luxury a generous country can allow a small minority of its members, but the pacifism invoked in the anti-Vietnam protest was hypocritical and spurious. Under the banner of a peace movement, rather, war was being waged by a privileged few upon the administration and the American majority that had elected it.

All I wanted from the doves around me was the admission that we had been led into the Vietnam mire plausible step by step, that the mire was U.S., us. A dark Augustinian idea lurked within my tangled position: a plea that Vietnam—this wretched unfashionable war led by clumsy Presidents from the West and fought by the nineteen-year-old sons of the poor—could not be disowned by a favored enlightened few hiding behind college deferments, fleeing to chaste cool countries, snootily pouring pig blood into draft files, writing unctuous peacenik Notes and Comments, and otherwise pretending that our great nation hadn't had bloody hands from the start, that every generation didn't have its war, that bloody hands didn't go with having hands at all. A plea, in short, for the doctrine of Original Sin and its

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obscure consolations. "In Adam's Fall/We sinned all," began that seminal American text, the *New England Primer*. New England had moved beyond this, and took a quite silly pride, I thought, in its haughty old disavowal of the Mexican-American War.

Two other factors, it occurred to me at the time, inhibited me from taking the handy dove position. I had been to Russia, and I had not served in Korea, which had been my generation's war to fight. I had hid out at Harvard, and then had not even gone into the peacetime army. I felt guilty at being 4-F, all the more guilty for being glad at the time, and hustling ahead with my career in those two years that I should have spent in barracks and canteens and the kind of boring clerical work that Philip Roth in his fiction has inflicted on Zuckerman. I would never know what I had missed, and read Roth's fictional versions of his army tour with envious interest. If Roth in person said, as he did, that the generals and presidential advisers knew no more about Vietnam and its alleged strategic importance than we did, he had earned the privilege of dissent, it seemed to me, in a way I hadn't. He had paid his dues. If Norman Mailer wanted to march in Washington and be briefly jailed and then write a funny, inflated, shrewd, skewed, pop-apocalyptic account of it, he, too, had earned the right, risking his life in the South Pacific against the fanatic Japanese while I, for my heroic part, was flattening tin cans in my grandfather's chicken house. If Kurt Vonnegut, having survived capture by the Germans and the Allies' firebombing of Dresden, wanted to fulminate in his woolly way against the powers that be, more power to him; he had paid a fair price for his skepticism and indignation. I had paid no such price; in fact, I had had a fine peaceful time being an American male in the middle of the 20th century. Defending the war (or, rather, disputing the attackers of it) was perhaps my odd way of serving, of showing loyalty to a country that had kept its hackneyed promises—life, liberty, pursuit of happiness—to me. When asked, in 1964, to go to the Soviet Union for a month as part of a cultural-exchange program, I consented partly because this would constitute a small patriotic service, a wearing abroad, at last, of my country's colors.

The month was an eye-opener: I liked the warm-hearted, boisterous, mischievous, many-layered Russians, not only my celebrated contemporaries and literary peers (who shouldered a burden of fame and expectation and watchfulness far greater than any my own nation imposed on its living writers) but the party officials with their gold teeth and steel smiles and iron stomachs and the shy students reaching out with Oxford-accented English and the insolent languid sloe-eyed shopgirls behind their piles of fur and amber and the utterly bald barber who tapped the top of my skull and grunted out the English words "This haircut"—meaning one I had had in Ipswich, six weeks before—"no good." I was thirty-two and showed a stamina and capacity for alcohol and blarney that surprised me, and a gift (my submissive Lutheran heritage, again) for "going along" with things. I had gone along at Shillington High School, I had gone along at Harvard, I could go along here. The Russian system, the few gears of it that engaged me, gave me no pain; the most oppressed people I saw were the tiny, grandmotherly attendants in the opera-house checkrooms, literally tottering as they hauled back and forth mountains of ponderous winter coats. Any system, in place, has a certain logic of inertia and quotidian practicality arguing for it; my Soviet escorts and hosts, being at home, were more appealing than the embassy Americans, who in their pinstripes and horn rims had the absurdity of interlopers. I did what I was asked to do, and dutifully tried to be a good guest of the Soviet state.

And yet I came away from that month, and the two subsequent weeks in the Eastern-bloc countries Bulgaria, Rumania, and Czechoslovakia, with a hardened antipathy to Communism. The difference between our empires was not, as many were beginning to say, and were to say louder and louder during the impending Vietnam years, six of one and a half-dozen of the other. It was more like eleven of one and one of the other. Ours was the distinctly better mousetrap.

What made me think so? Was it the glittering display of luxury goods and all the spandy-new runway equipment in the Zurich airport? After my weeks of quaint Communist drabness, Swiss efficiency and prosperity looked like a science-fiction movie. Or was it the little leaks of fear that would show while I was in Communist countries, the spurts of steam betraying the underlying pressure—suddenly impassive expressions, quick lapses into French to evade the eavesdropping walls, a burst of real, scurrying terror from my escort when it appeared I had lost my passport? I had never before been in countries where people were afraid of their own government—where everything, in a sense, every motion of the mind and heart and pen, was politics. And there was something bullyingly egocentric about my admirable Soviet friends, a preoccupation with their own tortured situations that shut out all light from beyond. They were like residents of a planet so heavy that even their gazes were sucked back into its dark center. Arthur Miller, no reactionary, said it best when, a few years later, he and I and some other Americans riding the cultural-exchange bandwagon had entertained, in New York or Connecticut, several visiting Soviet colleagues. The encounter was handsomely catered, the dialogue was loud and lively, the will toward friendship was earnest and in its way intoxicating, but upon our ebullient guests' departure Miller looked at

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me and said sighingly, "Jesus, don't they make you glad you're an American?"

I *was* glad, and resented having my native land, with its treasure of natural resources and enlightened institutions and hopeful immigrant peoples, being described as Amerika. The peace movement's branding our government with a swastika seemed to me insanely blasphemous and itself totalitarian. The United States of my pre-pubescent years had been many-sidedly, all-involvingly at war, and I saw no atrocity in its continuing to possess an army and a military-industrial complex. Our soldiers in Vietnam seemed no more misplaced than our heroes in the island-hopping campaign against the Japanese. In any case, it wasn't for me, a dermatological 4-F, to condemn a war other men were—if not enthusiastically, then stoically and stubbornly—fighting, and that our elected officials and their advisers found, from one administration to the next, essential to the national honor. In Sunday school, I had been much impressed by the passage where Peter denies Christ three times before the cock crows. My undovishness, like my battered and vestigial but unsurrendered Christianity, constituted a refusal to give up, to deny and disown, my deepest and most fruitful self, my Shillington self—dimes for war stamps, nickels for the Sunday-school collection, and grown-ups maintaining order so that I might be free to play with my cartoons and Big Little Books. I was grateful to be exempted from the dirty, dreary business of maintaining the overarching order, and felt that a silent non-protest was the least I in gratitude owed those who were not exempted.

And yet . . . wasn't there simply something of the high-school show-off, the impish contrarian "getting attention," in my refusal to take the unexceptionable position that neither God nor good reasons for our being in Vietnam existed? My religious and Vietnamese options were clearly allied; both made me feel vulnerable, excited, apologetic, and angry, and both were, in my adopted social milieu, rather original. Among the repulsions of atheism for me has been its drastic uninterestingness as an intellectual position. Where was the ingenuity, the ambiguity, the humanity (in the Harvard sense) of saying that the universe just happened to happen and that when we're dead we're dead? Where, indeed, was the intellectual interest of saying that Johnson and Nixon were simply dreadful Presidents? Truth had to have more nooks and crannies, more qualifications, than that.

I found the peace movement intrusive. The 60's were a palmy time, professionally, for me. The *New Yorker* accepted most of what I sent down to it, and toward the end of the decade a book of mine made a million dollars. My success was based, I felt, on a certain calculated modesty, on my cultivated fondness going back to childhood for exploring corners—the space beneath the Shillington dining table, where the nap of the rug was still thick; the back stairs, where the vacuum cleaner and rubber galoshes lived; the cave the wicker armchairs made when turned upside down against the rain on the porch. I had left heavily trafficked literary turfs to others and stayed in my corner of New England to give its domestic news. Now along came this movement wanting to gouge us all out of our corners, to force us into the open and make us stare at our bloody hands, and confront the rapacious motives underneath the tricolor slogans, and question our favored-nation status under God. There are two ways to live happily with a government: to accept or to snub it, to identify with it and rejoice in its policies, or to ignore it as an unworthy brawl that has nothing to do with one's self. I could do neither.

My earliest sociological thought about myself had been that I was fortunate to be a boy and an American. Now the world was being told that American males—especially white, Protestant males who had done well under "the system"—were the root of evil. Law-abiding conformity had become the opposite of a refuge. The Vietnam era was no sunny picnic for me; I remember it as a sticky, strident, conflicting time, a time with a bloody televised background of shame. Hawk, dove, soldier, draft evader, and even middle-class householder were caught in a web of contradictions as an empire tried to carry out an ugly border action under the full glare of television. The soap opera of the nightly news and the clamor of a college generation that had not been raised to be cannon fodder (raised, rather, on the demand feeding condoned by Dr. Spock and the six-minute attention span instilled by television) permitted no one to look away.

My disposition to take contrary positions and to seek for nuances within the normal ill-suited me for the national debate; I found the country so distressing in its civil fury that I took my family to London for the school year of 1968-69. For the second presidential election in a row, I cast my ballot abroad, in an American embassy. I voted, of course, for the Democrat, the shrill and embattled Hubert Humphrey. To my relief, he lost: Vietnam was no longer a Democrat's war, and belonged to the jowly, tricky Nixon I had hooted at in the Lowell House common room. I felt sorry for him, and knew just why he had to keep bluffing and bombing, but had no trouble voting in 1972, as the ghosts of my grandfather and recently dead father looked on, for the Democrat, the implausible rabbit-mouthed McGovern. I was in Africa, in January of 1973, when word came that Nixon and Kissinger had at last disentangled us, on shabby terms, from Vietnam; I was sitting on a stage in Nairobi and a black professor sardonically asked me from the audience what I thought of the great

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American victory. I said, spontaneously and truthfully, that our getting out felt like a victory to me. The Americans in the audience applauded. We were all tired to death of it; even the protest had worn out its welcome, and was no longer fashionable. We could begin to breathe again.

Now the involvement slowly settles into the historical past. War movies are made about Vietnam that sound more and more like other war movies, and there is even (so I read) going to be an attempt to do for it what *M*A*S*H* did for the unlovely, initially unassuming Korean conflict. In an unforeseeable way, as the vets and evaders age together, and Maya Yang Lin's superb black-marble V-shaped memorial—decked out with personal memorials like a Shinto shrine, a calm and polished Hades of names that takes us below the ground and up again—consolidates its place on the Washington Mall and the national self-image, the years 1965-72 melt into a dreamlike "crazy" time when grunts fragged officers and cops bopped hippies, when brutalized soldiers painted peace signs on their helmets and the daughters of Wall Street lawyers committed murders and robberies in the name of social justice, a baroque time of long-haired hardhats and alliterating Agnewisms, of Joplin and OM and homemade bombs, a time costumed in buckskin and sandals and camouflage khaki and dashikis and saffron robes and miniskirts right up to the crotch, a darkly happy in-between time after the Pill and IUD had freed sex from fear of pregnancy and before AIDS hobbled it with the fear of death, a time when pot and rock ruled in Danang as well as San Francisco, a time luxurious in the many directions of its craziness, since the war and the counterculture and the moon shots were all fueled by an overflowing prosperity no longer with us—a historical time, after all, that in the long run will hold us united as the Civil War opponents are united in the silvery-gray precision of the daguerreotypes they posed for. What with Woodstock and *Barbarella* and *The Joy of Sex* and the choral nudity in *Hair*, there was a consciously retrieved Edenic innocence, a Blakeian triumph of the youthful human animal, along with napalm and defoliation. The Vietnam intervention almost shrinks to the big bad trip in an era of trips ("If you remember the 60's," Robin Williams has quipped, "you weren't there"), but it discomfited me so much that I have avoided all of the movies about it, from the *The Deer Hunter* to *Platoon*, lest they revive my sense of shame, of a lethal stickiness, of a hot face and stammering tongue and a strange underdog rage about the whole sorry thing.

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What Was T.S. Eliot?

Robert Alter

THE centennial of T.S. Eliot's birth, 1988, was a year of reassessments of his role in modern poetry. Some of these were elicited by the sheer solemnity of the calendric occasion, others by the appearance of two volumes, Lyndall Gordon's *Eliot's New Life** (a sequel to her 1977 biography, *Eliot's Early Years*), and *The Letters of T.S. Eliot: Volume I, 1898-1922,*† edited by his widow, Valerie Eliot. Both Miss Gordon and Mrs. Eliot, the former from a scholarly perspective and the latter from a conjugal one, are staunch Eliot loyalists, but whatever their intentions, the general effect of placing more of his private life in the public domain is to confirm many of one's darker suspicions about him.

Eliot lived a cramped, painfully impaired emotional existence, afraid of or disbelieving in intimacy, ridden with guilt, harboring secret, murderous rages, contemptuous of large categories of human beings and of democratic government itself, a clandestine pariah—for all the propriety of his banker's demeanor—in the modern world that he represented with such arresting power in his earlier poems. His conversion to a particularly austere kind of high Anglicanism in 1927 was a strategy of desperation that made it possible for him to go on without collapse, but it scarcely redeemed him from his private hell, only gave him the stiff resolve of orthodoxy to bear up under the torment, and the consequences for his poetry were in most respects far from happy. One gathers that in his marriage to Valerie Fletcher, when he was sixty-eight and she thirty, he was at last vouchsafed a real measure of relief from all this horror. His last eight years seem to have been touched with a twilight serenity, though he was plagued with physical infirmities and well beyond his career as a productive poet.

The interesting question, in any case, raised by these biographical revelations is the connection between private anguish and poetic felicity: how did a person so cut off at a level of deep feeling from the world around him succeed in becoming its exemplary poetic voice?

I say, with circumspection, "exemplary" rather than "greatest" or "most original," for it was Eliot's genius, working within a narrow range and with what was, after all, an exiguous trickle of poems, to impose himself as the definitively modern poet in English. When I was an undergraduate at Columbia College in the 1950's, more than three decades after Eliot had published his strongest poems, no other 20th-century poet exerted the magnetism that he did on young people of literary bent. Many of us no doubt vaguely sensed that Yeats and Wallace Stevens were more original poets (and I would now hasten to add Frost as well), and had a more vital and supple relation to the living language, but it was Eliot who seemed the quintessentially modern poet. In part, this was a result of the excitements of difficulty—reading "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" for the first time at the age of eighteen, sorting out the aggressive puzzlements of the unexpected images, the rapid movement from one fragmentary scene to another, the unexplained "you" and "I" thrust at the reader out of a void at the beginning of the poem. More substantively, the sardonic edginess and the brooding spiritual gloom of Eliot's poetry spoke movingly to a late adolescent's sense of squirming discomfort with himself and anxiety about the world, and were seized on as the authoritative statement about living in the modern world.

This explains in part why bits and pieces of his poetry were so *memorable* in the literal sense. I can still recall sitting in classes in Hamilton Hall, repeating to myself, convinced I had discovered an ultimate expression of my own condition: "I should have been a pair of ragged claws/ Scuttling across the floors of silent seas." All such articulations of alienation culminated in "The Waste Land," and in my immediate undergraduate circle we actually made an impromptu ritual out of it, for a brief period reading the whole poem out loud every year on an evening in the first week of April ("April is the cruelest month, breeding/ Lilacs out of the dead land . . .")—a celebration

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† Harcourt Brace, 639 pp., $29.95.

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through performance not readily conceivable for any other modern poet.

I do not mean to suggest that "Prufrock," "Rhapsody on a Windy Night," "Gerontion," and "The Waste Land" are poems that exclusively issue from and appeal to adolescent *angst*. Though it is no doubt true, as Donald Davie has drily put it in a review of the *Letters* and *Eliot's New Life*, "that the author of 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock' was in many ways, and in particular sexually, less than adult," he succeeded in creating between 1909 and 1922 an iconoclastic poetic idiom that was not merely shocking but psychologically resonant for a new historical era. It is more than a little surprising that this should have been accomplished by someone of his background—raised in St. Louis, in an earnestly Unitarian family of old New England pedigree, educated with conventional propriety at the Milton Academy and Harvard in the first decade of the century, arriving in England in 1914 with precious little experience beyond a wealth of books read in several languages, including Sanskrit.

There was, to begin with, the irreducible, uncanny fact of precociousness. Eliot was only twenty-two, barely beyond his B.A. at Harvard, when he wrote "Prufrock," one of the remarkable modern poems in English. Ezra Pound, just three years his elder, who had embarked on a self-conscious program of fashioning a new literature, observed in a letter after meeting Eliot for the first time in London in 1914 that his young compatriot had "actually trained himself *and* modernized himself *on his own*."

Before speculating about what was involved in this process of self-instruction, or whether training is the right word for it, I would note that for Eliot, as for many others, promotionalism proved to be the welcome handmaiden of talent. His correspondence during the period when he was consolidating his career reveals above all the singlemindedness with which he pursued careeristic ends. (There is not a great deal of revelation of any other sort. Eliot, as even Lyndall Gordon admits, was not a distinguished letter-writer: he very rarely bares himself to his correspondents, and he offers scarcely anything of the sort of general reflections on literature and life that make the letters of writers like Keats and Flaubert so compelling.) Pound, of course, latched onto Eliot as a potential big winner for the new cause of modernism, and was chiefly interested in him, as he confessed in a letter, not as a person but as a producer of poetry. Eliot's feelings toward Pound were reciprocal. He remarked primly of his self-appointed mentor in a 1915 letter to his father, "He is not the sort of person whom I wish to be intimate with my affairs. He has shown a keen interest in my career; and has been and will be useful; but my acquaintance with him is primarily professional."

The bulk of the letters that constitute the first volume of Eliot's correspondence are precisely to people who might be "useful," and he exhibits the most impressive energy and adroitness in making contacts, enlisting supporters or contributors to the periodicals with which he was associated, arranging for publication of his books, exerting literary diplomacy even on writers for whom he elsewhere expresses disapproval or disdain. His decision to take up permanent residence in London was surely overdetermined—by his need to put several thousand miles between himself and his parents, by his desire to redefine himself as a European, by his precipitous and catastrophic marriage to Vivien Haigh-Wood—but the letters suggest still another urgent motive: his sense that London, in these years during and after the Great War, was the place where the action was for modern literature; that it presented, unlike Boston or New York, a coherent yet malleable literary scene which could be taken over by a formidably bright and enterprising outsider like himself.

Between 1914 and the mid-20's, as an editor, reviewer, essayist, and poet, he managed to do just that, with an astonishing degree of success. The key to all these activities was the assertion of authority. Eliot's ringing pronouncements on literature—which contained, he later confessed to E.M. Forster, an element of bluff—at once established him as arbiter of his age and promulgated among the literary intelligentsia the aesthetic principles that prepared an audience for his own poetry.

Nevertheless, the dedicated self-promotion would have been to no avail without the formidable talent, and we return to the question of how this young Harvard graduate at the end of the gaslight era succeeded so thoroughly "on his own," as Pound said, in making that talent an arrestingly modern one. The explanation Eliot himself hints at in his early letters is his discovery as an undergraduate of the poetry of Jules Laforgue, but that is, I think, only part of the story. Later, in a 1933 lecture at Johns Hopkins University, he would wonder whether it would have been possible for him to write poetry at all without the examples of Baudelaire, Corbière, Verlaine, Laforgue, Mallarmé, and Rimbaud.

Laforgue, it should be said, is probably the least of this 19th-century French constellation of proto-modernists, and the least modernizing of them in his formal poetics. Dead of tuberculosis at the age of twenty-seven the year before Eliot was born, he began his brief poetic career with blandly conventional rhyming verse, and ended it with rather more interesting experiments in free verse that are, however, tame in comparison with Rimbaud's technique of violent and disorienting associations or Mallarmé's hyper-elliptic poetics of enigmatic intimation. (In the 30's, Mallarmé would loom

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large for Eliot, but not during this formative period.) What Eliot most obviously picked up from Laforgue was a certain colloquial wryness and a predisposition to cull metaphors from the most prosaic realms (characteristics not much in evidence in 19th-century English verse), together with a variety of images and phrases directly borrowed from Laforgue's poems.

The act of borrowing is itself an integral aspect of Eliot's formal modernism. Most poetry, going all the way back to classical and biblical antiquity, is intrinsically and densely allusive, but Eliot pushed allusiveness to an extreme, turning it into a technique of collage. Louis Menand, in a perceptive essay on Eliot in the *Raritan Review*, characterizes him as "almost a stylistic kleptomaniac," and, indeed, the more closely one scrutinizes virtually any Eliot poem, the more it proves to be a cutting and pasting and ingenious reconfiguration of snippets from other poems. This is not to say that Eliot lacked his own voice as a poet (though I was once tempted to put it that way) but rather that he found the means to compose his own voice out of the inflections and inventions of others. "The Waste Land" thrusts this procedure to the fore but by no means initiates it.

Beyond images to be lifted and a tone to be emulated, what I think ignites Eliot's imagination in Laforgue's work is that it is the poetry of a very young and for the most part a very unhappy man. The French poems speak again and again of an abandonment (the word itself is important for Laforgue) that is erotic, social, and cosmic: the alienated speaker ("I am the pariah of the human family") repeatedly exhibits his grotesque misery, sometimes in the manner of a pathetic clown. There is, as in "Prufrock," a preoccupation with *Hamlet* and especially with the figure of Ophelia and the idea of sour or unfulfilled sexuality, and a good deal of contempt is expressed for the human body and the act of love. An early Laforgue poem, *"Pour le livre d'amour,"* begins with these lines, "I could die tomorrow and I would not have loved./ My lips have never touched woman's lips," and ends on this repellent note: "The raspings of the obscene coupling of beasts!/ So much muck for three minutes' ecstasy [*Tantes de fanges pour un accès de trois minutes!*]." The emphasis is decidedly characteristic of Eliot, early and late, and he may well have been remembering these lines of Laforgue's when he wrote grimly in "Marina" of "those who suffer the ecstasy of animals, meaning/ Death." These themes of alienation and wounded withdrawal from experience did not decisively lead Laforgue to a distinctively modernist poetics, but I suspect that is precisely what happened with Eliot, as I shall try to explain.

The published correspondence and, more prominently, the two volumes of Lyndall Gordon's biography make painfully clear how the rejection of the body and a visceral horror of women constituted a fundamental pattern in Eliot's life. As we now know from a letter to Pound written not long before his marriage, Eliot was a virgin when he became the husband of Vivien Haigh-Wood just short of his twenty-eighth birthday. She must have appealed to him as the perfect embodiment of feminine differentness—mercurial, impetuous, "artistic," charmingly pretty in a vulnerably petite way. It is not clear how much Eliot knew or guessed of her background of physical and emotional illness, which as early as adolescence had led doctors, according to the dim medical lights of that time, to dose her with opium. If he had the slightest intimation of this background, one may reasonably infer that Eliot was unconsciously choosing his own destiny of disaster, binding his fate with a woman who would become his exquisite tormentor, whether present or absent, till her death in an insane asylum in 1947.

Their marrige was apparently consummated but not much to the satisfaction of either. Only a month after the wedding, she told Bertrand Russell (with whom not long after she would have an affair) that she had married Eliot to "stimulate" him but had been disappointed in this hope; Eliot, who was present, sat listlessly by and raised no objection. According to Russell's testimony, the marriage had begun with a "pseudo-honeymoon" that brought the bride to the brink of suicide. Almost immediately, though one hesitates to say consequentially, Vivien plunged into a bottomless pit of physical and mental disorders, including attacks of acute neuralgia, migraines, colitis, pleurisy, a liver complaint, repeated bouts of flu, not to speak of her drug addiction, her suicidal impulses, her episodes of paranoid schizophrenia. "Vivien is not at all well" becomes a refrain of Eliot's letters. Her health problems frequently compelled her to live apart from her husband, in country retreats or occasionally at resorts, and even when they were together, such conjugality, physical or emotional, as they shared must have been very limited indeed.

Eliot's reaction to her illness was to insist sternly on his unquestioned obligations toward Vivien as breadwinner and legal mainstay—something reflected in many of the letters—while icily withdrawing from her emotionally in a reflex of self-protection. This in turn had the effect of provoking in her heightening spirals of rage against him, which often issued in terrible humiliating outbursts, sometimes in the presence of friends. When Eliot took a vow of chastity in 1928 the year after his conversion, he could not have been renouncing very much beyond a long-failed hope. Whatever intimacy with a woman he experienced was reserved for that happy union of his infirm old age.

Lyndall Gordon's new volume provides detailed documentation for a further involvement that has been generally known for many years: while Eliot

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was bound by iron links of livid guilt to his legal wife, he kept another woman on a long Platonic string for two decades. Emily Hale, three years Eliot's junior, was a friend of one of his Cambridge cousins, Eleanor Hinckley. He met her when he was still a graduate student of philosophy at Harvard in 1913, and there was some sort of flirtation, or perhaps even a mutual infatuation, between them. Soon after, he left for England, while she began a career as a drama instructor at various secondary schools and colleges.

In 1927, for reasons that may remain unknown until 2019, when the thousand letters Eliot wrote her are made available for inspection, Emily Hale initiated a correspondence with the poet whom she had not seen in thirteen years. In 1930 she came to England for an extended visit and spent a good deal of time with Eliot, idyllic time for both of them. In 1932-33, while he was Norton Professor at Harvard, he traveled to California to see her at Scripps College where she was teaching. (He did not initiate his legal separation from Vivien until his return to England, but she did not accompany him to America, among other reasons because she was afraid of sea voyages.) Emily Hale again visited him in England in 1933-34, and they continued a cycle of annual reunions in spring or summer until the outbreak of World War II.

Lyndall Gordon, a dutiful researcher who tends to accept uncritically the exemplary Christian design that Eliot sought to impose on his life from 1927 onward, expounds at length the myth of the two women that he lived out: the demonic woman of dark desires, consuming succuba, a soul glaring with hellfire, who held him in durance vile; and the radiant figure of kindness and devotion, Beatrice to his Dante, inspiring him from afar with a vision of grace. It is easy enough to identify the poetic versions of these two feminine types in his verse from "The Waste Land" to *Four Quartets*. The human reality behind the mythic polarization is quite another matter, however.

Even Lyndall Gordon admits that Emily Hale was "only a convenient focus for Eliot's evolving idea of love," and the nastiness of turning this flesh-and-blood woman into a convenience became evident after Vivien Eliot's death. Emily Hale, of course, expected Eliot, for whom she had been loyally waiting all those years, to marry her. Instead, confronted with the idea of actually living with her as a wife instead of dreaming about her as a Beatrice, he rebuffed her and brusquely withdrew from the whole ethereally passionate relationship, leaving her for the remaining twenty-one years of her celibate life nothing but her memories and his letters. "Love is most nearly itself/" Eliot wrote in "East Coker," at the midpoint of his protracted involvement with Emily Hale, "When here and now cease to matter." These lines, for all their aspiration to transcendent spirituality, are among the saddest he ever wrote.

ELIOT'S relations with women have a certain morbid interest in their own right, but they seem to me more important as the chief symptom of an encompassing inability, dictated by something like panic, to come to grips emotionally with people. I would thus bracket his misogyny with his anti-Semitism. In neither case was the hostility implacable or consistently ideological. His letters, for example, show him to have been a good enough friend to a woman like Virginia Woolf and as genuinely affectionate as he was capable of being to a Jew like Sydney Schiff, man of letters and patron of the arts. There are, to be sure, little tics of prejudice in the correspondence, like his comment to Eleanor Hinckley about "the clever Jew undergraduate mind at Harvard; wide but disorderly reading, intense but confused thinking, and utter absence of background and balance and proportion." This is mild enough in comparison with the ugly images in some of the poems of "the jew" squatting on a window sill or gnawing away at the piles like a rat, not to speak of all the murderous figures in the early poetry of sexually rapacious, fang-and-nail females, whether they are named Rabinovitch or something else.*

What ultimately troubled Eliot was not just women or Jews or Southern Europeans or Gypsies or working-class people but others in any conceivable form. His own sense of identity, his confidence in his ability to cope with the world, were so fragile that he repeatedly felt a potential of dark menace in the Other, and in a good many of his poems he projected his private terrors—"The horror! the horror!" was the Conradian tag he first wanted to use as epigraph for "The Waste Land"—onto representatives of the other sex, or faith, or class, or ethnic group.

This incapacity to open himself to others or to imagine them sympathetically, coordinated with a chronic uneasiness with life "here and now," links Eliot's sensibility with one prominent line of modernism. It is precisely the line that Lionel Trilling had in view when he detected in the modernists, beginning in fact with Conrad, an adversarial stance toward the dominant culture, a desperate hunger for spiritual salvation, and a profound suspicion of the idea of pleasure. It is precisely this cluster of attitudes that appealed to us excessively serious young men of Columbia College in the 50's, when we deemed Eliot chief among modern poets.

There was, let me note, a vigorous alternative to the modernism of alienation, a trend in literature and the other arts that Alfred Appel, Jr. has aptly designated "celebratory modernism." This trend is perhaps most evident in painting, in Mattisse, Dufy, Chagall, the Italian Futurists, but

* Years ago, I discussed Eliot's anti-Semitism in these pages as a symptom of his strained relation to the idea of a Christian culture in "Eliot, Lawrence, and the Jews," October 1970.

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it is also vividly manifest in literature in writers like Apollinaire, Joyce, Nabokov, Stevens, William Carlos Williams, and E.E. Cummings. The celebratory modernists responded to the rapidly accelerating technological civilization and the anti-traditionalism of the 20th century with a sense of high excitement, reaching for bold new formal means to capture the new urban landscapes and the new perceptions of human nature and culture.

Celebratory modernism shares with its alienated counterpart a powerful impulse to shatter the placid symmetries and jejune conventions of the dominant modes of 19th-century art, but with the aim of creating a fresh beauty rather than of expressing the pain of rupture or moral dislocation. There was enough deep affinity between the two trends of modernism that Eliot could be a passionate admirer at once of Joyce and of Stravinsky, although the harnessing of myth that moved him in both *Ulysses* and *Le Sacre du printemps* was meant in those works to affirm the resurgence of immemorial life-energies, whereas myth in his own poetry was a means for defining the woefully fallen condition of modern man.

In any case, modernism whether of the celebratory or of the adversarial variety may have once seemed, quite simply, the new art of the 20th century, but it has become increasingly clear in historical retrospect that it was really a phenomenon of the teens and 20's, with scattered luminosities of afterglow for another decade or more. Few careers illustrate this temporally delimited character of modernism more strikingly than Eliot's.

As the links between the two divergent lines of modernists may suggest, modernism was not just a set of attitudes toward life but an orientation toward the medium of expression. In this crucial regard, Eliot's emotional impairment may have actually been the motor force of his formal innovation. His inability to hold together the clashing elements of his inner life issues in a poetics of staccato discontinuities, conflicting voices, broken images serendipitously found in experience or in the work of other poets in which, for a moment, he can invest genuine feeling or intimate the presence of a submerged self. There was, Ronald Bush proposes in what is probably the best single book on Eliot,* a "painful and fundamental split in his psyche between thought and feeling," and as he discovered the poetic vehicle he needed in his early poems, "he turns from trying to reconcile the two to dramatizing their struggle."

Like many other aspects of Eliot's early poetry, this dramatization of inner struggle is most brilliantly realized in "The Waste Land." The panorama of paralyzing dread, as has been generally recognized since Valerie Eliot's annotated facsimile edition of the original manuscript in 1974, is a reflex of the poet's own crisis, in the midst of a nervous breakdown, but the reverberating correspondences between personal anxiety and the anxiety of the age, often remarked, are indeed remarkable, making this a great modern poem. Still, the balance of forces within the poet that enabled him, with Pound's editorial guidance, to create "The Waste Land" was precarious, for the psychic conflict was barely tolerable. Three years after "The Waste Land," in 1925, Eliot wrote "The Hollow Men"; it was still in his modernist manner, but its liturgical elements hint that he was beginning to move in a new direction. By the end of the 20's, after his conversion, when he was working on "Ash Wednesday," he had clearly put aside the dramatic, ironic, and imagistic procedures of his earlier poetry for a new Christian poetics founded on incantation, exhortation, and ritual enunciation.

All these elements are still evident, though cast in a more complex lyric form, in *Four Quartets* (1935-42), a work that Ronald Bush interestingly defines, along with the contemporaneous *Finnegans Wake* and Virginia Woolf's *Between the Acts,* as already "post-modern." The *Quartets* contain passages of the most exquisite poetry, but in my view they are profoundly compromised as poems by their predilection for homiletical rhetoric, spurious biblicizing, pious apostrophe, and portentous abstraction. Bush, who rates the *Quartets* somewhat higher than I do, nevertheless notes that their author has lost the ability he had in "The Waste Land" to "render the nerve endings of sensibility, the illusion that he has penetrated the masks of the self and arrived at the source of the buried life."

To return to Eliot when modernism was in flower, I would add to the idea of a conflict between thought and feeling a clash, perhaps still more fundamental, between reticence and confessionalism. The poet in his twenties and thirties shies away from expressing his experience because it is too painful, too humiliating, but at the same time he is driven to expose in poetry all his anguish and shame, and, indeed, has scarcely any other subject for his poems. The resolution between these two opposing impulsions—again, the balance is precarious—is a poetics of intricate indirection, baffling disjunctions, layered allusions. Fragments of scenes flash by with stroboscopic speed, momentarily revealing as they half-conceal the poet's self behind the poem. The method is almost programmatically described in "Prelude": "You dozed, and watched the night revealing/The thousand sordid images/Of which your soul was constituted;/They flickered against the ceiling."

IT MAY be easier to see how this reticent confessionalism engenders a modernist poetics by observing a poem in which the process

* *T.S. Eliot: A Study in Character and Style,* Oxford University Press, 287 pp., $8.95 (paper).

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is not very successful. The ironically titled "Ode" was written three years after Eliot's marriage to Vivien and was included in an elegantly produced 1920 collection of his verse, *Ara Vus Prec*. It is one of only two poems in that volume (the other is in French) which he chose—wisely—not to reprint in later editions of his collected poetry, and so it may be unfamiliar today to readers who are not specialists.

Tired.
Subterrene laughter synchronous
With silence from the sacred wood
And bubbling of the uninspired
Mephitic river.

Misunderstood
The accents of the now retired
Profession of calamus.

Tortured.
When the bridegroom smoothed his hair
There was blood upon the bed.
Morning was already late.
Children singing in the orchard
(Io Hymen, Hymenæe)
Succuba eviscerate.

Tortuous.
By arrangement with Perseus
The fooled resentment of the dragon
Sailing before the wind at dawn.
Golden apocalypse. Indignant
At the cheap extinction of his taking-off.
Now lies he there
Tip to tip washed beneath Charles' Wagon.

The characteristic procedures of "The Waste Land" are clearly in operation here, though not to any great imaginative effect: the ironic referring of contemporary figures to classical mythology, the mock-epic diction, the flaunted Latinisms, the unexplained citation of other poets, the highly fragmentary invocation of a plot difficult to decipher, and even the specific mention of the sacred wood and the children singing (in "The Waste Land," the line is quoted directly in French out of Verlaine: *"Et O ces voix d'enfants, chantant dans la coupole!"*). I would note that in regard to poetic genre, "Ode" and many other early Eliot poems have an 18th-century precedent of which he was probably quite aware: Jonathan Swift's "urban pastorals," like "A Description of the Morning" and "A Description of a City Shower," in which the triviality and the sordidness of a contemporary scene are focused through classical allusion and mock-epic style. There is nothing private, however, in these poems of Swift's, and if he displays an acute satirical sharpness, there is also a kind of sportive reveling in the sheer business of poetic representation of the world out there. In Eliot's case, the ultimate privateness of the experience is the key to his poetics and, for this poem, to its failure.

Whether or not "Ode" was meant to be a representation of the poet's own "pseudo-honeymoon," it is safe to say that the gnawing recollection of that personal disaster informs the poem. In fact, if one extracts the lead-in words of each segment from the elaborate ellipses that constitute the poem, the pathetic nakedness of complaint becomes evident: tired, misunderstood, tortured, tortuous, indignant. Literary allusion here comes perilously close to psychological defense, an attempt at once to veil and elevate humiliating physical experience. (The obfuscation is actually compounded by an epigraph from *Coriolanus* I have omitted that introduces the poem in bafflement because it is too fragmentary to identify, because it is slightly misquoted, and because its pertinence is obscure.) The Latin exclamation to Hymen—followed by a two-word line that is virtually Latin-English—is probably taken not from the beginning of Catullus's famous epithalamium but, as Harold Bloom has recently suggested, from Walt Whitman, who presumably is in turn citing Catullus. A previous clue for the presence of Whitman is the enigmatic "calamus" at the end of the eighth line, the Calamus Poems being a section of *Leaves of Grass* charged with erotic feeling. The word itself is Greek for a reed used as a pen.

What one can make out, then, is that the carnal entrammelment of the nuptial bed has broken the poet's sense of vocation—"the now retired/Profession of calamus" (and thus the sacred wood is silent and the bubbling stream uninspired). But I have proposed that the use of allusion is psychologically defensive because the classical and mythic referents threaten to collapse into indications of sexual physiology in ways that may not have been under the poet's conscious control. Not every pen is a penis, but in context, this retired—that is, withdrawn—reed, its accents misunderstood, has a sadly sexual look. The mephitic river, whose bubbling is coordinate with the silence from the sacred wood, carries a strong and unpleasant association with female sexuality. That suggestion is confirmed in the highly fragmentary evocation of what must be the bride as "succuba eviscerate." Since "succuba" is a singular feminine noun ("she-demon"), "eviscerate" must be an adjective, expressing, through the veil of convolute Latinity, a fantasy of the vagina as a gaping mutilation. At the same time, because "eviscerate" is normally a verb in English and because the syntax is so gnomic, one picks up an undermeaning in which "succuba" is somehow the subject of a transitive verb "eviscerate," the object of which would have to be the bridegroom.

All such intimations of archaic terrors are whirled together in the elliptic mythic references of the concluding verse-paragraph. There is, I think, genuine confusion in the mythic allusion that flows from the poet's psychological confusion

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about the experience. The classical Perseus rescued his future bride Andromeda by slaying the sea monster which was about to kill her. Here, apparently, the groom takes the bride by some subterfuge of agreement with the dragon, and both regret it after the fact. "Golden apocalypse" may be a remembrance of the conception of Perseus when Zeus descended into Danaë in a golden shower; it is not very coherent in context, perhaps referring ironically to orgasm. Between the beginning and end of the Perseus story hovers unstated its famous middle, Perseus's severing of Medusa's head, and one finds confirmation in the poem of Freud's idea that this horrific female head represents an upward displacement of the fantasy of *vagina edentata* ("succuba eviscerate"). The only reference to conjugal consummation undisguised by the elaborations of literary tradition beside the blood upon the bed is introduced right after the Perseus allusions, "the cheap extinction of his taking-off," and it hardly matters whether this is an explicit indication of premature ejaculation or simply a response to the brutishness and nastiness of the act ("so much muck for three minutes' ecstasy").

The poem was meant to end on a mock-epic note of the sort that Eliot uses to good effect in the Sweeney poems: the naked, dejected hero lying monumentally under the stars of the pre-dawn sky. This final image is more abortive than suggestively fragmentary, and the last two words are a symptomatic expression of the root problem of style. Charles' Wagon is Charles' Wain (Old English *waegn*), the seven bright stars of the Ursa Major. I do not know whether Eliot's etymologizing orthography reflects any actual modern usage (one should recall that he was accustomed to write with dictionary at hand), but the effect, certainly for many readers, is to end the poem with a gratuitous mystification. Everything said requires a strategy of concealment: the act of poetry is the uncovering of a nakedness in the biblical sense, and so the poet is impelled to find a form that allows him at once to preserve and violate the taboo.

WHAT is mainly crabbed expression in "Ode" becomes a powerful modernist vehicle in poems like "Prufrock," "Gerontion," "Sweeney Among the Nightingales," and, above all, in "The Waste Land." The poet's deepest reticences produce in his verse a radically disjunct reality in which nothing quite holds together because all the coherences of belief and feeling and social identity have been subverted, as in fact they seemed palpably to have been subverted in the years around the Great War. At the same time, the floating images reinforce one another, weave a subtle net of emotion, create a persuasive sense that they have issued forth from the same psychological depths, like the feline fog, the "eyes that fix you," the ragged claws, the long fingers of women, the allusions to Salome and the mermaids singing, in "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock."

For all the formidable weight of programmatic thinking about literature that Eliot manifested in his criticism, he did not so much train himself to be a modernist as he was hurt by unmanageable experience into modernizing his poetry. Despite the antipathetic aspects of his character, he deserves a measure of compassion, for he was able to produce a few of the trailblazing English poems of the century only at a terrible personal cost; and after fifteen years, the cost became too great for him. If, as we reread him and learn more about him, he no longer seems in many respects the paradigmatic modernist he once did, the creative tension in which for a while he held terrific inner pressures continues to exemplify the spiritual boldness, and the transience, of modernism's raid on the realm of the inarticulate.

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The Least Responsive Branch

L. Gordon Crovitz

THE Constitution established two-year terms in the House of Representatives in order to make it the body most accountable to the voters. Indeed, in the first reelection races during the presidency of George Washington, 40 percent of the founding incumbent Representatives lost, thereby ensuring a healthy turnover.

Last November, by contrast, the success rate of incumbents seeking reelection to the House was a stunning 99 percent, an increase over the already record figure of 98 percent of 1986. Moreover, among the 435 House races in 1988, fewer than one-quarter of the incumbents had to face more than token opposition, and more than four-fifths of the races were decided by landslides of 60 percent or more. In all, only six Congressmen managed to lose their jobs, and then only after being tainted by some hint of scandal.

THE near-complete success of incumbents has transformed the House of Representatives from the most responsive to the least responsive political body, one in which, as Ronald Reagan put it, "there is less turnover . . . than in the Supreme Soviet." Ironically, although voters are electing Congressmen more, they are liking them less; an annual Harris poll has found that the percentage of people expressing a great deal of confidence in Congress fell from 28 percent in 1984 to 15 percent in 1988. The huge outcry over this year's proposed pay raise suggests widespread public anger over more than just salary rates. What is going on?

In the early 19th century the English parliamentary system was corrupted by pocket boroughs, rotten boroughs, and even undersea boroughs. Today we in the United States have gerrymandering, Political Action Committees (PAC's), and the franking privilege. At the time of the English Reform Act of 1832, a mere two-thirds of the seats in Parliament were tainted by the various abuses. Our problem is much more serious.

Part of that problem goes back a long way, to the era when the English were perfecting their own system of corrupt boroughs. In 1812, Governor Elbridge Gerry of Massachusets designed the first notorious redistricting plan, labeled "gerrymandering" by his political opponents who noticed that the shape of the new district resembled a salamander. The procedure soon gained wide currency. Today, in those states where one party tends to exercise long-term control of the government (which is the level at which districts get drawn), it has become quite typical for there to be wild aberrations between the popular vote and the pattern of elected representation in Congress. Thus, in California, where in 1984 Republicans won more than half the votes statewide for House seats, Democrats were elected to fill 60 percent of them.

From the time of Governor Gerry until very recently, the only way to stop gerrymandering has been for the wronged party to wrest control of the state house and redraw the districts. But in 1986 the U.S. Supreme Court decided that political gerrymandering was justiciable under the equal-protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment (the Court had previously refused to get involved in this most political of questions except in cases of racial discrimination in which arguably individuals, as opposed to political groups, were robbed of a political right). The case at hand concerned a complaint by Indiana Democrats that although they had won 52 percent of the vote in statewide races, they got only 43 of 100 seats. While the Court found that Indiana Republicans had indeed clearly intended to draw districts to minimize the number of Democratic representatives, it ruled (rather unconvincingly) that there was nevertheless insufficient proof of discriminatory effect. The Court seemed to invite more cases, but recently refused to hear a challenge to California's redistricting. Both political parties have been hesitant to bring new cases—peculiarly so in the case of the Republicans, for with the exception of a few places like Indiana they have by far the stronger ground for complaint.

An even greater role in protecting incumbents than gerrymandering may now be played by campaign financing. Gerrymandering, after all, is an old custom, and it has never affected the retention rate to anywhere near the extent achieved by the campaign-finance "reforms" of the 1970's. And those reforms have also had a strong impact on Senate races, which are uninfluenced by gerrymandering.

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Under the current system, incumbents have unlimited access to the trough of Political Action Committees while challengers are permitted to raise only $1,000 from each contributor. In 1988, according to the Federal Elections Commission, some 80 percent of the $120 million in PAC donations to House and Senate races went to incumbents, up from 68 percent in 1986. Only three of the top 50 House recipients of PAC funds lost their races. Only two Senate candidates (Chic Hecht of Nevada and George Voinovich of Ohio) who received more than $1 million from PAC's managed to lose.

The money figures are skewed along party lines in favor of Democrats. Thus Democratic incumbents in 1988 received $44.9 million from PAC's while their Republican challengers collected only $1.4 million. Corporations, which might be thought to favor Republicans, know that the odds against removing an incumbent are overwhelming, and so tend to avoid angering the person who will be around after election day by supporting his opponent.

Campaign funding offers one of the clearest examples of information costs driving consumer selection (to speak in the language of economics). Before a candidate can begin to run on the issues he must establish "name recognition." For a challenger, this means an expenditure of millions, while all incumbents need to do is to keep their names in the hometown news, a small enough task. For a voter, the choice thus often comes down to one between the devil he knows and the devil he does not.

In this connection, incumbents have developed their own sophisticated system of self-promotion quite apart from their access to the local media. This is the "franking privilege," which started out as a way to get an occasional newsletter to constituents. Now these free mailings from Senators and Congressmen total nearly one billion pieces a year, more than ten times the amount of incoming mail to Congress.

2.

The abuses which enable incumbents to retain their seats with such ease are matched by abuses practiced in office. Take the franking privilege itself. *Roll Call* newspaper, which covers Congress, found that congressional staffers were being forced to stuff envelopes around the clock, without overtime pay, under threat of firing if they dared refuse. In the ensuing miniscandal members of Congress were accused, correctly, of having a plantation mentality; but there was no legal redress because Congress had exempted itself from the nation's fair-labor laws.

Nor are these the only regulations which Congress has seen fit to apply to everyone but itself. Thus, Congress is exempt from its own Civil Rights Act, Equal Employment Opportunity Act, Equal Pay Act, National Labor Relations Act, Occupational Safety and Health Act, Freedom of Information Act, Privacy Act, and Ethics in Government Act.

The idea of a political body exempting itself from the law resonates discordantly in our political history. Imagine the outrage if a President announced that a body of general laws applied to everyone but him; how much greater the offense in the case of the body that *creates* the laws in the first place. In *The Federalist Papers,* James Madison counted on Congress's being under the law in order to limit the harm it might do. Congressmen, he wrote,

> can make no law which will not have its full operation on themselves and their friends, as well as on the great mass of society. This has always been deemed one of the strongest bonds by which human policy can connect the rulers and the people together. It creates between them that communion of interests and sympathy of sentiments of which few governments have furnished examples; but without which every government degenerates into tyranny.

In 1984 the House, under pressure, held a kind of referendum on its "communion of interests and sympathy of sentiments" with the American people when it voted on whether to continue its exemption from the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which covers every other institution in the country. The vote, 277 to 125 against, was not even close.

3.

Notwithstanding the constitutional scheme of a legislature to pass the laws, an executive to execute them, and a judiciary to interpret them, Congress has increasingly decided it means to perform all three functions. Thus, for example, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) takes its marching orders only from John Dingell, the Representative who chairs the appropriate congressional committee. He it is who drafts the securities laws, and he it is who directs the SEC to investigate and, astonishingly in light of the constitutional prohibition of Bills of Attainder, prosecute individuals and firms he selects for alleged breaches of those laws. The situation is so perverse that the Supreme Court has finally agreed this term to consider whether the Constitution in fact permits the SEC to function as a prosecuting body outside the control of the executive branch.

How did Congress manage to organize itself to take over so many of the previous responsibilities of the other two branches, and especially of the executive? The seeds were planted fifty years ago, when a whole series of new tools of government was created to help reverse the effects of the Depression. The alphabet soup of New Deal agen-

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cies that began with WPA and CCC has grown and thickened and yielded to SEC, FTC, NHTSA, OSHA, NLRB, and a dozen others. For a time in the 1930's and 1940's, there was a consensus that these congressionally-mandated administrative agencies represented impartial reservoirs of expertise on the various ills of society. As Stephen Carter of the Yale Law School has written, "The word 'administer' is an evocative one, conjuring images of experts poring over mysterious charts and volumes of exhibits before deciding on the best answer." Now, however, we have the spectacle of administrative agencies making essentially political decisions in a context where there is little political accountability, or rather where accountability is of a species entirely circular.

The next crucial step in the inflation of congressional power was the "reforms" of the 1970's that balkanized the committee system. There are now subcommittees on Tobacco & Peanuts, Transportation, Tourism & Hazardous Materials, Libraries & Memorials, and even Oversight of Government Management. For each area of our national life that the federal government now regulates, there are Congressmen to chair the newly created committees and subcommittees; last year's trade bill was crafted by 200 conferees working in 17 separate subcommittees.

In addition to distorting the institutional system of checks and balances, this process has created what Daniel Henninger of the *Wall Street Journal* has called "America's biggest company town." Washington thrives on a production line of new laws and regulations, most of which require new spending. The process is ripe for abuse as members pass legislation that will help an industry that can in turn be counted on for a PAC contribution, or hinder legislation harmful to that industry.

Spillage from the congressionally fueled federal budget has caused income in the Washington, D.C. area to skyrocket as area firms receive about $2.5 billion annually in goverment contracts. Indeed, Congress as feeder of the federal leviathan even helps explain the budget deficit. Since 1981, when Ronald Reagan took office, tax receipts have grown by $375 billion, but spending has grown by more than $450 billion. Alan Greenspan, chairman of the Federal Reserve, has located the fundamental problem in what he calls, "for want of a better term, the 'congressional culture.'" In a farewell speech, Ronald Reagan found another phrase, the "Iron Triangle"—made up, as he saw it, of parts of Congress, the media, and special interests:

> A measure of this iron triangle's power derives from its permanence. Administrations come and go, but the members of the iron triangle endure. Even the body that the framers of our Constitution intended to be the most vulnerable to shifts in public attitudes, the House of Representatives, has . . . become a virtually permanent chamber. . . .
>
> But the iron triangle's power also comes from its ability to focus debate and overwhelming resources, like campaign money and letter-writing campaigns, on issues that don't command broad and intense national attention. . . . Special-interest groups focus all their resources and members on this line or that in the budget. And members of Congress, particularly liberal members, with their dependence on special-interest campaign financing and their fear of bucking any group that is strongly committed to a spending program, take up the banner and join the charge.

The solution that Reagan discovered, rather belatedly in his term of office, was a reinvigoration of the presidency by a return to the impoundment power that Congress removed in its 1974 budget act. He was right, but he did not leave George Bush with the tools to do the job.

4.

PERHAPS the biggest barrier to reclaiming executive-branch authority is that Congress has shown what it will do to individual executive-branch officials who energetically pursue a President's agenda or, worse yet, dare defend presidential powers against congressional incursions. This is nowhere more clear than in the many cases of men and women who came to Washington to work for Ronald Reagan and left office under a cloud of false allegations of criminal wrongdoing.

The best-known of those cases were the ones stemming from the Iran-*contra* affair.* But perhaps the most compelling such case concerns a relatively obscure former Justice Department official named Theodore Olson.

As Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Legal Counsel, Olson got caught up in a huge battle over the hazardous-waste program known as Superfund. The day after Anne Burford resigned as administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency in 1983, Olson was scheduled to testify at a routine Department of Justice hearing, but instead was called on to defend before Congress the claim of executive privilege to cover correspondence between agency lawyers and alleged wrongdoers. He thereupon became the subject of an inquisition which resulted, two years later, in a 1,300-page report by the House Judiciary Committee charging him with giving false and misleading testimony. Democrats on the committee then demanded the appointment of an independent counsel, duly named in May 1986.

Although by November the special prosecutor, Alexia Morrison, could report that "standing in

* See my article, "Crime, the Constitution, and the Iran-Contra Affair," COMMENTARY, October 1987, for a detailed analysis of this point.

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isolation . . . Mr. Olson's testimony of March 10, 1983 probably does not constitute a prosecutable violation of any federal criminal law," she nevertheless continued her investigation for another two years before finally announcing that there was no evidence to indict him on any charge. In the process she spent some $1.4 million of taxpayer funds, while forcing Olson to run up personal legal bills approaching $1.5 million—all for doing nothing more than faithfully representing his client, President Reagan, and the presidency itself. The lesson has not been lost on other executive-branch officials.

Where they are not in fear of criminal proceedings, some executive-branch employees have been so intimidated by congressional demands that they no longer know whom they serve. Robert Gates, now George Bush's deputy National Security Adviser, described the situation in an article published when he was still President Reagan's deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency. Eight congressional committees, he wrote, get the CIA's daily national-intelligence report; in 1986 alone, the agency sent some 5,000 such intelligence reports to Congress. As a result, many Senators and Representatives are at least as well informed about intelligence activities as are policy-makers in the executive branch. But this intelligence "is often used to criticize and challenge policy, to set one executive agency against another, and to expose disagreements within the administration." Gates added:

> The result of these realities is that the CIA today finds itself in a remarkable position, involuntarily poised nearly equidistant between the executive and legislative branches. . . . Such a central legislative role with respect to an intelligence service is unique in American history and in the world. And policy-makers know it.

Congress has also effectively tried to handicap the ability of the executive branch to attract personnel by passing a new "ethics bill" that President Reagan was forced to veto in November 1988. Making it illegal after leaving an executive post not just to lobby but also to engage in any "aiding or advising" of any employer on matters related to the government, the bill would have prevented a specialist from working for a firm that had any government contracts, thus effectively rendering weapons experts or AIDS researchers unemployable. And by introducing a "permanent restriction" category of impermissible activities by former executive-branch officials, the bill would even have made it a potentially criminal act for ex-President Reagan to offer advice to President Bush.

5.

WHETHER or not President Bush is likely to provoke the kind of confrontation with Congress that is necessary to restore some balance of power between the branches, there is a limit to how much even the most aggressive President can do; the real solution must come from within.

Fortunately, there are some signs that Congress itself is aware of the problem. One of the less-noticed developments of recent years is the extraordinary number of leading Congressmen, especially Senators, who have simply resigned. Congress may have an operating budget of $1.8 billion and a huge staff, but it is staff members who write the laws, do the negotiating, and craft the legislative history—leaving their bosses mainly with the chore of protecting the gerrymander that guarantees their district and shaking the branches for PAC contributions.

Florida Senator Lawton Chiles was chairman of the Budget Committee when he decided not to seek reelection, one of three committee chairmen to make the same decision. Washington Senator Dan Evans, explaining why he was leaving, summed up life in the upper house by saying that Senators "read yesterday's headlines so that we can write today's amendments so that we can garner tomorrow's headlines." Even Senator William Proxmire of Wisconsin, who cited age as the prime reason for his retirement, told an interviewer that the most needed change in our politics was adoption of a line-item veto for the President and a balanced-budget amendment. No conservative, Senator Proxmire understands how a lack of external discipline on spending, initiated when Congress stole the impoundment power in 1974, has changed the give-and-take of politics for the worse.

The English battle to end the rotten-borough system was long and hard. Our fight to make Congress more responsive to the voters has not yet begun. It involves not only dealing with gerrymandering, PAC's, and all the other incumbent-protection devices, but persuading individual Congressmen that guaranteed life tenure in a bloated, imperial, and imperious institution is less desirable than transient participation in a properly functioning democratic government.

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Nuclear Revisionism

Patrick Glynn

One important by-product of the passionate antinuclear controversy earlier in this decade has been a wave of new and influential revisionist writing on the role of nuclear weapons in postwar history. The central theme of the new revisionist movement, broadly speaking, is the alleged *unimportance* of nuclear weapons—their limited usefulness over the last forty years, not only as military weapons but especially as diplomatic tools. In particular, these newer historians, call them "neorevisionists," attempt to make the case that American nuclear superiority, for as long as it lasted, was far less of a factor in international politics, and less crucial to American security, than has previously been assumed.

McGeorge Bundy, former National Security Adviser to Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, has been in the forefront of this movement. Four years ago, in a provocative essay called "The Unimpressive Record of Atomic Diplomacy," Bundy set forth a kind of neorevisionist manifesto, challenging the traditional view that nuclear weapons had played a decisive role in a half-dozen major cold-war crises and confrontations. Among the targets of Bundy's revisionist pen: President Truman's latter-day boast that he had used the Bomb to dislodge Stalin from Iran in 1946; President Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles's more serious reports that American nuclear threats had helped to end the Korean war; and, perhaps most remarkably, the Cuban missile crisis—long seen by public opinion as proof *par excellence* of the efficacy of superior U.S. nuclear forces. In all three cases, Bundy argued, American nuclear superiority not only was not the decisive factor but in fact played a relatively insignificant role. The essay provoked a flurry of commentary (much of it favorable) and new historical research. Bundy, meanwhile, promised to present further evidence for these counterintuitive views in a forthcoming book.

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That book, recently published,* actually attempts to cover a good deal more than the neorevisionist controversy over "atomic diplomacy." Billed as a comprehensive study of "political choices" about the Bomb, *Danger and Survival* tells in lengthy and somewhat laborious fashion the basic story of the nuclear age, beginning with the American decision to build the atomic bomb in the early 1940's, and concluding with Bundy's prescriptions on current policy issues. Still, at the heart of the text is the author's effort to vindicate the neorevisionist thesis: to show by detailed historical argument that superiority in nuclear forces does not matter and never really has.

It is not an easy case to make. Take the central instance of Cuba. The Cuban missile crisis occurred at a time of almost ridiculously lopsided American superiority in nuclear weapons, when the U.S. advantage over the USSR in strategic missiles was approximately nine to one (438 to 50) and in strategic bombers approximately twelve to one (1,700 to 140). Bundy now argues that the outcome of the crisis would have been "the same" in an environment of "strategic parity." I suppose that this is possible, but it defies common sense.

Still, it is worth looking closely at Bundy's analysis of the Cuban episode, not only because the neorevisionist perspective is becoming increasingly influential among scholars who study these matters, but also because Bundy's analysis reveals with particular clarity the curious political assumption at its root. Indeed, at bottom, Bundy's argument about the missile crisis turns out to be essentially circular, based less on an analysis of nuclear weapons than on a certain attitude toward politics. This attitude, in turn, accounts for the peculiar perspective on the nuclear dilemma presented in his book as a whole.

One reason that Bundy's verdict on the Cuban episode seems so odd at first glance is that strategic superiority would appear to be precisely what the 1962 missile crisis was all about. By Khrushchev's own later admission, the Soviet leader put the missiles in Cuba in 1962 at least partly to remedy the USSR's strategic inferiority (this was almost certainly his main motive). President Kennedy,

* *Danger and Survival: Choices about the Bomb in the First Fifty Years*, Random House, 735 pp. $24.95.

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meanwhile, deliberately invoked the threat of U.S.nuclear forces—not only in his October 22, 1962 speech to the nation, but in a highly visible alert of U.S. strategic forces—to get Khrushchev to take the missiles out. Yet Bundy and former Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara have tried for some time to argue that local conventional strength—in the form of the U.S. naval quarantine of Cuba—rather than nuclear superiority, was the decisive factor. In 1982 they issued a "joint statement" with four other senior colleagues from the Kennedy administration asserting this view. (As became clear in discussions and interviews during and after a 1987 meeting of former crisis participants and scholars in Hawk's Cay, Florida, not every former Kennedy official shares the Bundy-McNamara view by any means—Paul Nitze is a notable dissenter.)

Like many previous revisionist movements, however, the neorevisionist approach is driven less by fresh historical evidence than by a theory. The theory in question is that of "mutual deterrence," sometimes called "existential deterrence" or "mutual assured destruction." The basic tenets of this theory, first advanced by the strategic writer Bernard Brodie over forty years ago, are now well known: because of the intrinsic power of nuclear weapons, superiority in nuclear forces is not really strategically meaningful or necessary for deterrence. Thus, it is argued, a nation in possession of a survivable nuclear retaliatory capability can be confident in its ability to deter aggression regardless of the superiority or inferiority of forces on either side.

It was only in the 1960's, under the administrations in which Bundy and McNamara served, that U.S. policy began to be based explicitly on this theory. It was during the same period—not entirely coincidentally—that the Soviet Union began to gain strategic parity with the United States. The developments were partly linked: though the shift in the strategic balance was owing primarily to Soviet efforts, the Western faith in mutual-deterrence theory made decision-makers in Washington far less concerned about the Soviet missile build-up, and far less anxious to counteract its effects, than they otherwise might have been. What the neorevisionists—and Bundy's book in large part—attempt to argue is that even before mutual deterrence became official U.S. policy and before the Soviet Union gained parity with the United States, mutual deterrence was the operative reality of the nuclear age.

Implicitly following this mutual-deterrence model, Bundy contends that what caused Khrushchev to avoid war in both the Berlin and Cuban crises of the early 1960's was not any calculation of an American strategic advantage, but the *mutual* danger that nuclear war itself posed for either side. What actually deterred war was not American nuclear "superiority," but a general and shared nuclear "danger."

That is one way of putting the situation, but I believe it misses the point. The point is that in *neither* crisis of the early 1960's—nor for that matter in the earlier Berlin crisis under Eisenhower—did Khrushchev have any intention whatsoever of going to war. Rather, Soviet leverage in these crises depended on creating the *illusion* that the Soviets might be willing to risk war—an illusion to which the young intellectuals in the Kennedy administration, of whom Bundy was one, proved particularly susceptible at the time. In this sense, and the Kennedy mythology notwithstanding, the Cuban crisis differs fundamentally from the Sarajevo crisis of July 1914, when Germany was perfectly willing to go to war—and did.

Since Khrushchev was not interested in war, what was at issue was not so much deterrence itself as each side's subjective and imperfect calculation of the other side's willingness to take risks—in particular, to take political steps or conventional military action that might eventually escalate to nuclear war. In this calculation, the perceptions of nuclear superiority and inferiority no doubt played a critical role. Interestingly, a great deal of evidence brought forward in the course of Bundy's own narrative tends to support this view.

Two facts are particularly important in understanding the missile crisis. First, while both the U.S. and Soviet governments were aware that America had massive nuclear superiority, this was not generally recognized outside of government circles. Since the launching of Sputnik in 1957, Khrushchev had succeeded in convincing the world, and Western publics in particular, that Soviet nuclear capabilities exceeded or at least matched those of the United States. Second, one major consequence of the missile crisis—probably the most important consequence—was to confirm American strategic superiority in everybody's eyes. The fact that Khrushchev agreed to withdraw his missiles from Cuba so quickly suggested that the disturbing Soviet nuclear threat that had worried everybody in Europe and elsewhere during the previous five years had been a paper tiger all along. As a result, the basis of Khrushchev's power position in world affairs was seriously undermined. Not coincidentally, the relentless and frightening Soviet pressure on Berlin, which had defined the reality of the cold war since 1958, suddenly died down.

In this sense, the Cuban missile crisis was a genuine victory for the United States. But it was a qualified victory. In exchange for Khrushchev's withdrawal of the missiles, Kennedy agreed that the United States would not invade Cuba. (There was a second, secret Kennedy concession on removing U.S. Jupiter missiles from Turkey, which figures importantly in Bundy's analysis—about which more in a moment.) While an open and unprovoked U.S. invasion of Cuba was unlikely

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in any case—particularly after the Bay of Pigs fiasco—in practice the U.S. agreement meant accepting the Cuban regime as part of the international status quo. Notably, in the wake of Kennedy's agreement, a major covert action against the Castro regime—"Operation Mongoose"—was terminated.

In essence, therefore, the United States seriously circumscribed its own options vis-à-vis the Castro regime without obtaining from Moscow assurances that Cuba would not interfere in the internal affairs of other Western hemisphere nations. The mischievous consequences of this lopsided arrangement are amply apparent today—in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and elsewhere. So there was a price paid for the withdrawal—to say nothing of the erosion of the Monroe Doctrine, cornerstone of American foreign policy for 150 years, which Kennedy's agreement somewhat heedlessly cast aside.

Does Bundy regard the Cuban missile crisis as having been a victory or a defeat for the United States? The answer is not clear, and herein lies the beginning of the difficulties with his analysis. On the one hand, he resists acknowledging the adverse consequences of Kennedy's concession on invading Cuba. On the other hand, perhaps even more curiously, he fails to dwell at any length on the favorable political consequences of the administration's handling of the crisis—Khrushchev's loss of power position and the resultant improvement in Soviet behavior. (The change in the balance of power at the time was so pronounced that Raymond Aron argued that in the nuclear age, the international crisis had come to replace war itself as the ultimate method by which nations settle their accounts. It was as though the Soviets had actually lost a war.) If Bundy does not regard the crisis as an American defeat, neither does he treat it as a real victory. This, we shall see, holds the key to his entire view of the episode.

What about the relative importance of nuclear and conventional forces? Critics have already pointed to problems with Bundy's basic contention that nuclear superiority did not matter. The best review of the arguments, and indeed of the neorevisionist debate generally, is to be found in Richard K. Betts's 1987 volume, *Nuclear Blackmail and Nuclear Balance*. (Incidentally, Betts's concise and evenhanded book would be a good alternative to the weighty Bundy tome as undergraduate course reading.) As Betts and others have pointed out, if conventional forces were the only factor, Khrushchev could have responded to the U.S. naval quarantine around Cuba by moving against Berlin, where the Soviets had a comparable conventional advantage. He did not. In addition, while the U.S. went on full nuclear alert, the Soviets never reciprocated, suggesting that the nuclear threat in this crisis was one-sided.

Bundy himself presents a remarkable quantity of evidence to support the view that nuclear superiority did indeed matter. (If he is to be commended for his intellectual honesty in bringing forth so many facts adverse to his position, there is also something maddeningly perverse in his reluctance to accept their logical implications.) To begin with, he acknowledges that American resolve in the Berlin crisis was affected by knowledge of U.S. nuclear superiority. According to Bundy, U.S. officials' awareness of American nuclear "superiority," and the belief that it would make Khrushchev "cautious" in pressing his demands over Berlin, "stiffened American determination." But this admission would seem to be fatal to Bundy's entire case. To say that American determination was affected by U.S. nuclear superiority (in Berlin, to repeat, the United States was at an acute disadvantage in conventional forces) is already to say that strategic superiority had a major effect on the outcome of the crisis.

For what were these crises about, in the final analysis, but a test of wills, a test of each side's "determination"? In the case of Berlin, indeed, given how pliant the Kennedy team actually proved to be over Soviet demands—despite the valiant efforts of General Lucius Clay and others to stiffen the U.S. position—one wonders what Kennedy might have conceded in the *absence* of clear U.S. nuclear superiority. James Reston of the New York *Times* noted damningly at the time that, faced with Khrushchev's nuclear blackmail, the young President in 1961 "had talked like Churchill and acted like Chamberlain."

What about American determination in the missile crisis? Here Bundy states categorically that American officials derived "no comfort" from the strategic balance. However, Betts draws our attention to a revealing letter to McNamara from General Maxwell Taylor, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, at the height of the crisis. *"We have the strategic advantage in our general war capabilities,"* Taylor wrote (emphasis added). ". . . This is no time to run scared." Some officials, then, were obviously thinking about the nuclear balance. It is interesting that Taylor became another latter-day convert to the view that nuclear weapons had been unimportant in the crisis.

But perhaps the most important question concerns Soviet resolve in the face of American nuclear superiority. Was Khrushchev's behavior in the crisis wholly unaffected, as Bundy implies, by his knowledge of the U.S. nuclear advantage? Was it merely a mutual nuclear danger and an imperative to avoid nuclear war that shaped his actions? Here again, Bundy himself notes that CIA director John McCone, alone among the Kennedy officials and in defiance of CIA analysts, predicted that Khrushchev would try to put missiles in Cuba. Bundy attributes McCone's special insight to the latter's strong belief in the importance of nuclear

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superiority—a belief he shared with the Soviet leader. But if McCone was better at predicting Khrushchev's behavior on this basis, does not this raise doubts about Bundy's own revisionist portrait of the Soviet leader as an implicit believer in mutual deterrence?

On this issue, moreover, we have one relevant fact which Bundy does not manage to put before the reader—namely, some striking testimony from Khrushchev himself. In reporting to the Supreme Soviet two months after the crisis, the Soviet leader not only drew attention to the U.S. nuclear alert during the crisis but added: "If [imperialism] is now a 'paper tiger,' those who say this know that this 'paper tiger' has atomic teeth. It can use them and it must not be treated lightly." It is clear that American nuclear capabilities played a prominent role in Khrushchev's calculations.

Apart from its direct effect on deterrence, the nuclear balance was bound to affect each side's estimate of the other side's willingness to take military action *even below the nuclear threshold* at any given moment, knowing that this might easily escalate to a wider war.

This factor seems to have been critical at the key turning point in the Cuban missile crisis, on Friday and Saturday, October 26 and 27, 1962. On October 26, Kennedy received Khrushchev's famous first letter—a long, emotional document (Dean Acheson later called it "maudlin") with the mark of Khrushchev's own hand. The letter stressed the dangers of nuclear war and offered what appeared to be a sliver of light, hinting at the possibility of trading withdrawal of the missiles for a U.S. promise not to invade Cuba.

This possibility had been raised more explicitly in a curious episode early the same day. A senior KGB official in Washington, Alexander Fomin, proposed precisely such a formula for a settlement to an intermediary, ABC reporter John Scali. Scali in turn took Fomin's message to the administration. The administration was heartened by the prospect of a way out, and Secretary of State Dean Rusk gave Scali a message for Fomin indicating that such a solution might be possible.

Then on Saturday came a reversal. Radio Moscow began to broadcast a second Khrushchev letter, this one probably composed by committee, with harder terms. The new letter demanded the removal of Jupiter missiles from Turkey in exchange for the withdrawal of Soviet missiles from Cuba. On the same day, the administration received news that U-2 pilot Rudolf Anderson was missing over Cuba; he had been shot down. The shootdown of Anderson would greatly heighten domestic pressure for decisive action on Kennedy's part.

After long and tense deliberations, the President sent his brother Robert to Soviet ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin with both a secret concession and a kind of ultimatum. The President would be removing the obsolescent missiles from Turkey anyway (plans had begun months before), but did not want this to be a part of a public deal. Also, the President's brother was instructed to emphasize, time was short. The Soviets were given until the next day to respond.

As U.S. forces massed for an air attack and invasion, Robert Kennedy's message was fortunately reinforced by an angry Scali, who "denounced" his KGB interlocutor Fomin for "'a stinking double-cross'" and added: "If you think the United States is bluffing . . . . you are part of the most colossal misjudgment of American intentions in history. We are absolutely determined to get those missiles out of there. An invasion of Cuba is only a matter of hours away."

Bundy believes that the angry Scali-Fomin exchange—which was entirely on Scali's own initiative, without instructions from the President—had a big effect on Khrushchev, and one is inclined to agree, since the public Soviet message on withdrawal of the missiles came the next day. Khrushchev obviously settled because he did not wish to risk the onset of military action by the United States. Scali's encounter with Fomin no doubt helped make this risk seem more real. However, because Khrushchev had offered the basic terms of the trade on Friday, Bundy argues that these warnings "affected the speed of Khrushchev's response more than its substance."

In politics, as in drama, timing is often everything. Bundy's complacency about the importance of the strategic balance goes hand in hand with an effort to discount the importance of the Soviet response to the pivotal American warnings on October 27. This rests in turn on two highly questionable suppositions: (1) that time was on the American side, and (2) that a *public* trade of the Jupiter missiles in Turkey for the Cuban missiles—Kennedy's probable fall-back position in the event his Saturday proposal was refused—would not have been a bad outcome.

That time was on the American side hardly seems self-evident. "Each week," Bundy argues, "would have endangered the position of Khrushchev and his supporters much more than it endangered us." But one must ask: which sort of government is more likely, over time, to come under domestic pressure to waver from its original purpose or to suffer more when its public loses a sense of urgency about a crisis—a democracy or a totalitarian regime? The notion that time is on the side of the democracies in foreign affairs, it would seem to me, perished in the jungles of Vietnam.

Second and more fundamental, however, is the issue of the Jupiters. Even though he advised Kennedy otherwise at the time, Bundy now argues that "a formidable set of arguments" could have been marshaled "in support of [Kennedy's] acceptance of a public trade." Here is where Bundy's argument turns circular. Bundy's retrospective

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judgment to the contrary, the political difference between a public trade of the missiles and the secret deal Kennedy actually got was absolutely fundamental. It was the difference between victory and defeat.

THE major outcome of the crisis was the perception that Khrushchev had been forced to back down. He had been. The very fact that Khrushchev was compelled to keep the American Jupiter concession secret indicated that the U.S. had the upper hand. Khrushchev could use the concession on the Jupiters to save face with his Politburo colleagues, but not with the world at large. That was a fact of critical importance, for it destroyed the illusion of Soviet nuclear predominance that had formed the whole basis of his power position in world affairs. (Thereafter, having been robbed of the illusion of predominance, the Soviets would seek to achieve the reality of predominanace through their subsequent long military build-up: as First Deputy Foreign Minister Vasily Kuznetsov said to John McCloy during their November negotiations on the removal from Cuba of the Ilyushin-28 bombers, "You Americans will never be able to do this to us again!")

The problem with a public trade of the Jupiters was the one Bundy saw at the time—in his words then, "[I]t would be clear that we were trying to sell our allies for our interests." Rather characteristically, Bundy told the President the European view would be "irrational" and "crazy" but was nonetheless "a terribly powerful fact." It was not irrational and crazy; the Europeans would have been right—since to permit the perception of a sellout under Soviet pressure was to sell them out in reality. The effect, in short, would have been roughly the opposite of the secret arrangement. Khrushchev would have been perceived not as losing face, but as gaining a significant concession—witness how large the issue of INF missiles has loomed in Western European consciousness in this decade—through his daring gambit of putting missiles in the Americans' own backyard.

To argue that a public trade would essentially be the same as the secret trade is to argue that losing would have been the same as winning. If you believe that, as Bundy seems to do, then you are not likely to place much importance on the effect the nuclear balance might have had on Khrushchev's calculations or resolve or on *the nature or timing* of his October 27-28 decision. If the political outcome was irrelevant, then whatever marginal effect U.S. strategic superiority may have had on Khrushchev's assessment of the willingness of the Americans to initiate military operations against Cuba was unimportant.

That is to say, to the degree that attention shifts away from the political consequences of particular crises and confrontations, to the mere question of whether nuclear war was or was not avoided, the importance of strategic superiority naturally diminishes. This, it seems to me, is the key to the neorevisionist approach. When Bundy writes, "I think the result of the confrontation in 1962 would have been the same with strategic parity as it was with American superiority," it is important to ask what he means by "the same." If by "the same" he means with or without a public trade of the Jupiter missiles, as I think he does, I suppose one might even agree with him. But it is a circular argument, a tautology: if you don't care about political outcomes, you don't have to worry about the details of your power position (of which nuclear superiority would obviously be a major part).

But the distinction between "winning" and "preserving peace" is a false one. Bundy's implicit denials notwithstanding, an adverse political consequence for the United States over Cuba would have deeply hurt future prospects for peace. If Khrushchev had been perceived as winning the missile crisis, or even as fighting the Americans to a draw, Soviet pressure on Berlin would undoubtedly have continued, and new, perhaps more dangerous, crises would likely have followed. These crises in turn would have raised anew the possibility of war.

Indeed, Bundy's account inadvertently shows how close the Kennedy team came to bungling the whole affair, even as they held all the cards. History owes something of a debt to John Scali, who did what some more official emissary of the President should have been explicitly instructed to do when the Jupiter concession was delivered: tell the Soviets in no uncertain terms that this was the last offer.

In the end, however, Bundy's presentation of the crisis is deeply paradoxical. His narrative seems to cut one way, even as his analysis cuts another. His narrative, if anything, *emphasizes* the roles of chance, timing, and individual courage (particularly on Scali's part) and fear (on Khrushchev's part) in the crisis outcome. Yet his analysis attempts everywhere to deny the critical importance of these factors. The strong implication of his narrative is that Khrushchev's October 27-28 decision depended heavily, perhaps decisively, on Scali's warning to Fomin—an irrational factor. At the same time, he tries to construct a larger, rational picture in which the significance of this critical episode somehow fades.

One can understand a reluctance to accept the implications that follow from a view of Scali's role as crucial: it would imply that the Kennedy administration's success in the crisis was indeed, as a disdainful Dean Acheson later said it was (on the basis of his own first-hand observations of the crisis deliberations), an "homage to plain dumb luck." Still, in attempting to deny the importance of the particular resolution achieved, and the particular factors that produced it, Bundy is turning his back on something fundamental in pol-

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itics—on what amounts to the essence of a political decision. This denial turns out to be central to the book and to his view of nuclear weapons as a whole.

AGAIN and again in *Danger and Survival* Bundy supposes that there was some easier and better alternative than the one actually chosen by decision-makers. The book begins with the faint suggestion that the United States might have altogether avoided building the atomic bomb in the first place. It goes on to suggest that President Truman could have taken what was essentially some scientists' advice at the time and detonated the Bomb publicly as a warning, instead of dropping it on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This is followed by discussion of the earliest effort at nuclear disarmament—the 1946 Baruch Plan for total "international control" of atomic energy—in which Bundy implies that a different sort of agreement based on more modern arms-control principles might possibly have been negotiated with Stalin. The habit of contra-factual hypothesizing reaches a kind of absurd climax in the chapter on the H-bomb decision, in which Bundy actually constructs a hypothetical, "different" U.S. President (not Truman) who proposes an H-bomb ban that Stalin hypothetically accepts.

In all this—as in the analysis of Cuba—there is a basic refusal to accept the essentially tragic and irreversible character of the most important political decisions. Bundy argues that all these decisions might have turned out better. But is it not more probable that they could have turned out worse? What if the United States had neglected atomic energy, and a totalitarian power had been first to develop the Bomb? What if the scientists' proposed demonstration of the Bomb had backfired, lengthening World War II, promoting dissension among the Allies, and costing thousands upon thousands more lives? What if some imprudent arms arrangement had been negotiated with Stalin, at a time when European confidence in American power rested heavily on atomic weapons? What if the Soviets had been first to explode the H-bomb, as they were first to test an intercontinental ballistic missile a half-decade later? One emerges from the first third of this book with a certain sense of gratitude that America's postwar world position was well established by tough-minded men before thinking like Bundy's came to influence policy.

Indeed, what is missing in this study of "political choices" is precisely a feel for the character of political choice—for the environment in which the most important decisions of statecraft are made, an environment of uncertainty where timing is often of the essence and chance is always a factor. (Often enough in history all that has stood between a victorious outcome and disaster for an entire nation has been one man's courage, one man's willingness to assume risk, one man's ability to rise to a moment that passes in a blink and is gone.) It is precisely on this margin where the most fateful human decisions are so often made, and it is here that factors like strategic superiority begin to count, where the psychological edge provided by a superior power position, however theoretically unprovable, may be all that stands between total victory and disastrous defeat.

In this sense, "mutual-deterrence" theory is more than an effort to deny the relevance of nuclear superiority; at its heart it is a denial of politics. It assumes that a structure of "mutual balance" can be erected outside of time, exempt from time and variation, from human irrationality and chance, which will preserve peace. It ignores the deeply temporal, fortuitous, and fundamentally human character of political power. To embrace it wholeheartedly is to lose sight of politics; to act upon it consistently is, in all likelihood, to lose the political struggle itself.

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Purple Smoke

A Story

Felix Roziner

To Lev Feigelovitz

The action of this story, based on a true incident, takes place just after the end of World War II, when Lithuanian partisans (the Greens, the Forest Brotherhood) were engaged in fighting the Soviet occupation.

Soon it will a year since these letters began arriving—from a judge in Chicago, a lawyer in Cleveland, the police here in Jerusalem, Danny Varshavsky in Philadelphia—envelope after envelope, and in each one Vladas, Vladas, Vladas! I don't remember any Vladas! I don't know him! They want me to come and talk, to answer their questions like a robot—where was Vladas? when? why?—but I don't remember, don't know, don't understand. There's nothing I want, nothing I can do for them, and I shouldn't try to tell them anything because all that has stayed in my consciousness is a column of smoke, a column of purple smoke, a low shroud of fog along the forest's edge, hanging over the grass, a dim fire glowing through the fog—and above it that purple column of smoke, in front of the birches, and higher. At the top, the column breaks and stretches along the very treetops, stretches and moves. Swirling. Breathing. Only that remains—a dim fire glowing through a shroud of fog and over it that purple smoke. . . .

Summer of 1941, first days of the war in Lithuania, and the seaside town of Palanga was under bombardment. We were evacuated in haste, and there was no way our parents could have found out what became of us: the staff of our sanatorium was scattered in all directions. At Smolensk, in Russia, the train was broken up, some of the cars heading south, while we were routed to the Urals and even farther, to Kazakhstan. I was fourteen. I became a trainee in a war plant, went to a few classes while I worked there, received a certificate that I had completed the whole training, and was already preparing to be called up—as I hoped, for officers' school and then to the front. But just at that point the war ended. After glancing at a slip I'd kept from the children's pulmonary sanatorium in Palanga, the army doctor listened to my breathing and stamped my papers "unfit." I had already been released from the factory as a draftee, so my papers were all in order. I hung around the station for a few days, found a train that took me through Moscow, past Smolensk, back to Lithuania. It was on that train that I met Danny Varshavsky. He talked me into getting off in Vilnius, where I stayed with his family. It was he, too, who dragged me to the university admissions office. In 1945 students were in short supply. We passed the examinations and were both enrolled. I had to find a place to live, but I left it all to Danny and took a trip to Shaulai. Danny and his father, who worked in the party executive committee, kept telling me I was crazy.

In Shaulai, though I spoke perfect Lithuanian and didn't look Jewish, no one took me for a local. They regarded me with suspicion, clammed up, and kept their distance. I named my destination as Ukshchai, said I was going to search for my parents, and of course everyone there, in Shaulai, knew that the Jews had lived in Ukshchai up to the war, and none of them wanted to speak about the bad things that had happened. Besides, it was dangerous to help a stranger, dangerous from every angle: who knows who he is, this city type who says one thing but probably has quite another on his mind? And it's true: agents of all kinds, police, investigative groups, were roaming from place to place, pressuring, flushing out, arresting people and trying people, and the death squads were waging war against the Greens up and down Lithuania. Here there was no peace; here death had not yet made a peaceable division of its possessions with life—as if to say, I will take the gravely wounded, the old, the accidental failures, and you take the rest, the healthy and young—no, here death strolled in an easy proprietary way, maybe not so brazenly as in the

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war, maybe hiding a little in the woods and groves, the farms and the unfrequented roads, but still. . . .

THE journey before me led from Shaulai into remote country, at first along the high road but then off to the side, into places which were, judging by people's reactions, deadly. I elbowed my way through the Shaulai market, striking up conversations. No one would even consider driving me, though I offered good money and provisions from my store of rations. I had American cigarettes, too. One *muzhik* glanced at them—he was heavy and stolid, with a growth of red stubble, terrifying enough to look at, and stinking drunk besides—looked, swallowed his spit, took my packs in silence, stuck them in the pocket of his fur vest, thought it over, took one out and broke it in two. I waited while he lit up and took the first drag.

"OK. You'll ride under the hay."

I still don't know whether that *muzhik* took me with the purpose of handing over a city boy to the Forest Brothers, or whether we simply ran into them on the outskirts of Ukshchai. I had been dozing while the cart creaked and jounced. Hay drifted into my nostrils, my ears, my collar. My head was splitting. I knew that dusk had fallen and that we should soon be there, but it's likely that everything by then had melted into delirium, half-dream, hallucination—from the jolting of the cart, or perhaps even before, from the smoke of the American cigarette—and the hallucination extended to the sight of that bent column of purple smoke, and the four insane years, just past, when life and death had contended in Ukshchai, where I had once lived in a room with a window overlooking the pasture that my father and mother now lay buried under, and where a place for me might be reserved, too.

The stopping of the cart woke me. I could hear calm voices, half-whispered talk. Had my driver told them there was a man under the hay? Somewhere near my chest the hay was parted, and through its latticework I saw a bayonet moving alongside my body. "Hold on," I said as calmly as I could, "I'm coming out!"— and began to clear the grass away from me. Somebody held my elbow while I jumped down from the cart. I shook myself, and thinking how comical it was to come crawling out like that, covered with hay like a wood sprite, I smiled at them. Then I said hello. There was no answer. My *muzhik* stood there speechless; they didn't touch him. The one standing closest to me said, "Let's go. That way." He pointed with his chin where we were to walk.

There, in fact, some hundred yards from the road, was that warming fire, enveloped by the evening fog, and above it, on the gray green of the birches, hung a thick column of smoke, round as a pillar, and why it bent and stretched out sideways, over the edge of the grove, defied explanation. What was burning there—and for that matter whether what I was seeing was real, I can't say, I don't remember—I was seeing death. I was standing in front of it, it was looking at me—how was I to tell what was alive and real around me from what was only fog and smoke? And those who stood looking at me were seeing death, too. One of them sighed and shifted from one foot to the other.

"Ekh!" he sighed. "We've killed so many already. . . . How many more, Commander?"

Their commander, the one who had summoned me to follow him into the grove, answered, and I saw who he was, this man who was preparing my death.

"We don't know him. He's not ours," said the commander, and I cried out:

"Vladas!!! Vladas, it's you!!! Vladas, remember Daugela?! Daugela took out after your dog. Remember? The stones? It *is* you, Vladas!"

"Cut the shouting. Who knows, they may be looking for you," he hissed. "You're Yossel."

"How are you, Vladas?" I wiped the hay from my forehead and relaxed.

"Why are you here?"

"Didn't he tell you?" I looked at the peasant. "My parents. It's been five years, Vladas. They sent me to the sanatorium, then we lost touch. I wrote to them in Ukshchai, there was no answer, now I'm on my way there."

"All right, cut the chatter!" he barked, and I was reminded of why you didn't fool with him. Even in the old days he was feared. I was still a baby when Vladas, not more than fifteen, had already managed to set the whole district against him. He was a dangerous brawler, was already ruining neighborhood girls, and once some of the local fathers had tried to set him up for a collective beating. In Daugela's house, where we lived, the older daughter also was involved with Vladas, and our landlord once attempted to get at him through his dog, pelting the unhappy beast with stone after stone. I rushed from the porch, sobbing, put my arm around the dog's neck, and caught the next heavy stone in my side. It broke two ribs. That night Daugela got drunk, wept and begged forgiveness from my father, kneeling in front of him as in a church. Vladas declared, "This Hebrew is under my protection," and after that nobody dared touch me, either in school or on the street.

"Let's go," he said. And added, to reassure me: "We're on our way to Ukshchai. You'll go with us. You'll spend the night with us, too—at Daugela's. In the morning you get your ass out of here and keep it out!"

WHEN we got to Daugela's it was clear in a a flash why these six men from the detachment of the Greens were quartered with him: Jana, the younger daughter of our host, the one I used to play with in the sand, was now a dark-haired, strong-bodied beauty. She threw her arms around Vladas, who embraced her without

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letting go of his rifle and kissed her in front of her father and the others in a way that allowed no doubt: she was his woman.

"Yossel," Daugela said, "Jesus and Mary, Yossel—our Yossele—is back! Pan Leibl and Pani Bronislava. . . . Look, Yossele—over there, at the edge of the pasture." He pointed out the window and I looked. "See there, where the ground is uneven? Thirty-eight of them, Holy Father forgive us all!" And still looking out the window he said, not to me but as if to the glass: "They'll be burying you there, too, mark my words."

I gazed at him with astonishment and noticed that the others were watching us in silence. Daugela began to play to them, smirking obsequiously, bustling about to give his guests a proper reception with vodka and bacon, ham and onions, with pickles and steaming potatoes. He did it alone. His wife had died in the war, the older daughter lived on a farm with her husband. So, Jana, like her sister before her, had caught Vladas's eye, and now Daugela's house was his. Vladas's house—of all the places for me to land in! If the authorities knew that Vladas was calling here, they could arrest me on the spot, tomorrow even, as soon as a policeman caught sight of me. A single question—"Where did you put up for the night?"—and they'd lock me up. I've got to get away in the dark, I told myself as I drained glass after glass with my companions; with the host—I'd lived half of my childhood with him; with Jana—we used to swim in the brook wearing only trunks, and sometimes if we had sneaked out of the house without permission, nothing at all; with Vladas, who had once taken me, his Hebrew, under protection and had just come close to shooting me.

Soon all of us were drunk. But the men still kept their rifles between their knees, and they were discussing some matter of their own, speaking in a way meant to be inaudible not just on the other side of the door but even here, across the large table, where Daugela and I sat at the end. His daughter was next to Daugela and her face was impassive.

I didn't feel the liquor—my nerves were a coiled spring—but I deliberately opened my moist lips, putting an uncertain fork between them and sometimes dropping food on the floor, pretending to be terminally drunk. As for Daugela, he had lost the last remnants of his composure; his head was on my shoulder, and once, when his long sweaty hair covered my face, he whispered hoarsely into my ear, spattering it and flooding me with his stinking breath:

"He'll kill you. . . . He'll be afraid that. . . . He was in that squad when they finished them off—all your people, your parents too. . . ."

I shuddered, but he didn't notice and went on babbling: "Unless we kill him. . . . I couldn't do it alone. You're young. . . . The trouble is Jana, the bitch. She'd kill us both and to hell with her father. . . . Or they would. They'll be back. The Reds too."

The delirium that had begun in the morning went on—we had all gathered here to look at each other and see death, skulls with bullets in them, scattered bones, who gets whom, who comes first and who last, someone's brother or husband is that same someone's murderer and avenger, they sit there at the table and trade off these horrible roles, with no way out: it's either kill or be killed.

When it was time to sleep, Vladas went off to Jana's bedroom, Daugela to his own. They put me in the kitchen, and the rest of them spread out on the floor of that large front room where we had eaten. I lay with closed eyes waiting for dawn. When it began to lighten, I got up and picked my way among the sleeping bodies to the door. Half-sitting and dozing, with his back against the jamb, was one of the brotherhood, posted there as a sentry. I tapped his shoulder and even shook it lightly to wake him. Leaping to his feet, he looked at me blankly, pulled his rifle to him, and shook his head. "No. Go back. We'll all leave first," he said. I went back to the kitchen and lay down again. In the large room I heard movement and quiet speech. The door kept opening and closing, they were leaving at five-minute intervals, each one obviously waiting to see if all was clear outside. I waited too, and when the sounds stopped, I left the kitchen again. Daugela was sitting at the table.

"Drink." He held a glass out to me.

I sat down opposite him, drank off the lukewarm vodka, and began to eat. Fear loosened its hold on me; my head cleared. For the first time I reflected that I was sitting in the house I had once called mine—we, too, had lived in half of it, separated from the owner's half, the one in which I was now sitting, by an internal wall. So I could go into our rooms and see. . . . See what? Suddenly I began to notice that the objects surrounding me—that carved shelf that mama used to call "the Italian one," and the big clock next to it, the marble sink in one corner and the glass-fronted breakfront in the other—all those things from that lost world in which, once upon a time, they and I had had a place and a role. I was reaching with my fork for a piece of potato when my hand stopped: on the border of the plate was a chip in the shape of a little sailboat. "Give me the one with the sailboat, the one with the sailboat," I used to plead when mama was pouring the soup. *Daugela's family was eating from our plates!* And I was eating from them, too. I chewed in silence, trying out ways of saying to him, "These are our things, my things, give them back"—and I felt how impossible this was. Not from fear, or what I thought Daugela would say or do in reply, but from a reluctance to lose the sensation of an agreeably smarting, disturbing, and at the same time satisfying ache—not a strong one, of the kind you feel in the muscles of a

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generally healthy body when an endlessly long journey with a load that strains your back suddenly comes to an end and you collapse, motionless, and no longer want anything except to savor, with a feeling verging on enjoyment, the ache and the peace, which stretch out like the road behind you, endless. Daugela's house, and Daugela himself, the whole setting, the dish with the chip, that monogram on the fork, and this window, and the pasture beyond it where, to the left, at the edge of the forest, there is a long irregular grassy mound. . . . And I here since yesterday. . . . And all this is mine so long as I am still here, but would cease being mine if I were to pile the things into a cart and haul them off somewhere, because the ache and the peace would be here and the things somewhere else, and the pasture would still be here, and I somewhere else—maybe nowhere, how should I know who I would be, or where, why, for whom? . . .

"They'll pick you off," said Daugela, nodding toward the corridor that led to the two bedrooms. So that was why Jana hadn't come out—Vladas was still there! "As soon as you go out they'll fire. Anyway, who would give you a ride? Nobody. You can't get away."

"What for?" I said to him. "I don't understand. Why would they want to kill me?"

"You could turn them in."

"Why would I want to turn them in?"

"Stupid. You've seen them. And you know Vladas. Have another drink."

We had another drink.

"People will be looking for me. People know in Vilnius that I came here," I told him—and realized suddenly that this might better have been left unsaid.

Daugela reflected.

"All right. But, you know, if they kill one of their own around here, folks can search and search and never find the body. So if they kill an outsider?"—he spat—"think for a minute: who needs you?"

He got up, went into the kitchen and started drinking noisily, ladling it up out of a bucket. I acted on instinct: I made my way quickly and soundlessly to the front door, opened it, went out, and struck out across the pasture. If that pasture had been any wider, the skin on my back, stretched by fear till my ears rang, might have exploded, scattering the flesh under my skin like a keg dashed on the ground. At the mound I stopped. Here they would have a good shot at me: from the woods straight into my chest, or from the house, through the window, between my shoulder blades. I felt a chill in my bones. I walked along the mound and turned back. Then I sat down on the wet grass, there on the highest part of the mound, and took out a cigarette. I smoked and wiped my face, smearing the tears. A cart loaded with people emerged from around a turn in the road; they must have been going to work in the fields, and again I found myself acting instinctively—I hurried toward them, figuring that my captors would hardly kill me in full view of others. Among the houses on the street I was out of danger; I walked, at the same time recognizing and not recognizing all the things I used to see daily. This was the way I had walked to school and back; I used to take that lane over there down to the river. Soon I was nearing the square in front of the Catholic church—across from it was the old town hall—now, of course, it housed the local Soviet. . . . I was in luck; the police station was in this very building. I went in.

It was still early, and only the clerk on duty was sitting behind a desk in the waiting room. I held out my passport to him and said that I wanted to speak with the officer in charge. The lad knew his work: "Where's your permission to be here? Look, the old residence stamp is canceled and there's no new one."

I explained that I was being registered in Vilnius, that I still hadn't managed to finish the process. He picked up the phone and, covering it with his palm, started talking with someone, at length and almost inaudibly. After hanging up, he said, "Come with me," and led me to a little room. There were bars on the window.

"Wait here. The chief will come, you'll be called."

He kept my passport. Fine, I thought, everything's going well. They've detained me; when they let me go I'll ask to call Vilnius and Danny's father will get me out of this—and of course it will have to be arranged that they send me to Shaulai in a police car. It's all working out, I told myself happily. The sleepless night and what I'd drunk in the morning had exhausted me, and sitting there on the stool, elbows on the table, I dozed off. After a while my name was called, and the same young man took me to the chief. He was a small whitish man with little red eyes. He, too, may not have slept that night. He started in Lithuanian, then switched to Russian.

"Josef Yankelevichus, right?"

"Right."

"Before the war your family lived here, in Ukshchai, right? You see, we know you. And now you've come back?"

"Yes—or no, I came to Vilnius, and then here. . . . I didn't know what had happened to my parents."

"I understand, comrade. But what can you do, comrade, in a war there are so many victims, so many. . . ." He stopped and shook his head in sympathy.

"There should be at least some kind of fence there," I said. "The cows walk all over the. . . ."

"That's a matter for the executive committee, talk to them." He pointed to the wall. "They're open after lunch today, from two o'clock on."

"I won't be able to. I have to go back to Vilnius."

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He stood up, walked around the table, brought me a chair and ordered me to sit down. Back in his place, he began to speak slowly. I listened with growing horror. You will go nowhere, he said first off. You will stay here. There is a struggle in progress—with the class enemy, he said, accomplices of the bourgeoisie, kulaks, and war criminals, who are trying to hide from justice. But we'll soon be rid of our enemies, and forever. As a local resident, you can consider yourself mobilized for front-line battle with the class antagonist. We need you here. As for the university, you're young, you can study later, when Soviet control has been firmly established and we've finished them all off. I've already talked with Vilnius and your case has been decided favorably, as I requested. Your official residence is in the house of Kazimiras Daugela. We need somebody of ours there, the house is under suspicion and we don't have enough people. We are asking everyone to help—teachers, doctors, every Soviet worker. We'll get you a job in the school, we need a teacher of Russian. Credentials under present conditions are a secondary matter; you'll learn on the job. For now, take a rest. You'll be given a leave till September. And then you'll start your work. We'll be in touch.

He opened a desk drawer, found the rubber stamp, opened my passport, and stamped it carefully. He entered something with a pen and signed it with a flourish.

"Comrade Yankelevichus, you are registered to live on the former premises of your family. In accordance with the residence laws. Congratulations and welcome home."

He rose from his chair. I rose from mine. As if in a dream, I returned his handshake.

"Now let's go," he said.

He took me to Daugela's.

"Who is it?" I heard his voice through the door when my companion knocked.

"Open up, Daugela, I've brought you a lodger."

The door was a long time opening. When we entered. Daugela was breathing loudly, and sweat was pouring from his face. Jana, who had been watching us carefully as if waiting for us to hurl ourselves at her, moved slowly sideways along the wall, retreating to the back of the room, closer and closer to the little corridor that led to the bedrooms. I understood: Vladas was still sleeping, she would wake him, he would grab his rifle, and. . . . Behind the police chief's back I signaled to Jana, looked over at him, and held a finger to my lips. She stopped.

"All right, Daugela," the chief was saying, "You'll put the teacher up here. The school will pay you for his room. Forms have to be filled out, you know about that. He already has a residence permit."

The chief shook my hand again and left. We stood motionless. I noticed how at the end of the corridor a sliver of light appeared and started to widen—a door was swinging open smoothly and silently, and when it had, Vladas stood behind it—in his undershirt and shorts, white, disheveled, tense, his rifle under his arm. The barrel rose until it was leveled at me. Vladas, moving slowly in his bare feet, came forward and our eyes met.

"Good morning, Yossele," he said hoarsely.

"Good morning."

With his left hand he poured himself a glass of vodka, drained it, and sat down as he was, in his underwear, leaning the rifle against the table.

"You didn't know I was still here—right, my Jewish friend?" he said to me.

"I knew," I said, and glanced over to Jana. She was watching Vladas.

"You're lying." He shook his head, yawned, and picking up the jug of vodka started filling three glasses. "Sit down, Daugela. You too. Let's drink."

I was feeling sick to my stomach, but I sat and drank with them.

"So," he stared glumly at me, "we should have finished you off yesterday, eh? But it's not too late even now." A guffaw ended in a fit of coughing. "And if you did know, you told him, right? I walk out of here and they're waiting in ambush, right . . . ?" Again he fixed me with a menacing and spiteful look.

I braced for a blow from that large fist of his.

"He didn't give you away!"

The words were Jana's. She had remained standing by the wall. Vladas turned to her; he might have been about to strike her.

"Let him tell his story," Daugela put in hastily and refilled Vladas's glass. "Go on, Yossele, tell what happened."

I told them everything, beginning with my fear of being shot from the woods. My terror pleased Vladas, he snickered and nodded, as if confirming that I was right to fear his men. I summarized the conversation in the police station and ended by saying:

"I only want one thing—to get out of here. Help me, Vladas, Daugela. When I get to Vilnius, I have a friend there who can cancel my registration here. I've already been accepted at the university. What do you say?"

He didn't answer. Without a word he rose, took his rifle, and went back to the bedroom.

"Oh, Jesus-Maria," Daugela whispered, "Jesus-Maria. . . ."

Vladas was dressed when he returned. There was no rifle. He sat down across from me.

"You'll stay here," he said. "Nobody is going to help you get away. You think the war is over? They want to drive us over to their side, to make the whole country part of that Soviet shit of theirs. But we are fighting to the death, and God will be our judge. You want to tell me that your father and mother, Pan Leibl and Pani Bronislava, are long since dead, that they were the first to be killed, and now it would be well if my turn came as quickly as possible—right, Yossele? All right.

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But I look at it just the other way: better for you to die now and me some time later. Because here's what I say to you, Comrade Joseph: if they are dragging you into this bloody affair, nobody needs to remember anything except not to be killed. God is not watching. He'll sort it out later, He has His court in heaven for that. But here there is only one court: ready, aim, fire, Vladas! When they drag you into this thing, no one is remembering who you are, a boss or a hired hand, a German or a Jew, a Litvak or a Russian, a professor or crazy Jurgis, the village idiot. Remember him? The Russians wanted to take him in because he begged on the streets. Jurgis jumped from the belltower. Your father and mother may be in heaven now, I don't know. I'd ask my priest, but the Russians killed him last month. As for your Reb Rubinas, the Germans got him, along with Pani Vasine who had been hiding him for two years.

"We lived quietly, you remember, Yossele. I was the only one who may have been a little noisy. To keep things from being boring. You'll say they didn't like you, and I'll say that nobody likes anybody. The Lithuanian doesn't like the Jew, neither of them likes the Pole, the eastern Lithuanian doesn't like the western one, and each still goes around saying that the other is not a real one. Just as one brother doesn't like another when it comes to dividing the father's farm. Nobody liked anybody, but we lived peacefully around here and we didn't live badly, you remember, Joseph, until the Soviets brought in their ways. Then the good Jew went to denounce the bad Lithuanian as well as his own bad *landsman,* the good Lithuanian hired hand went to denounce the Pole he worked for, and everybody who didn't join the Communists got loaded into trucks headed for Siberia—you remember, in May of '41? You were still a snotnose and your family didn't get sent off only because your uncle had been a Communist years before, but the Germans killed him, too. When they buried your people there in the pasture, there were some who cried—but not many; our people were no longer crying then, many were even laughing. Now everybody is crying, and those that are in the ground can laugh. Their souls are in heaven, Holy Mary defend them—even if you don't believe in her, what's the difference.

"You'll stay here, Yoshka. Their grave is over there. And this is your grave if you make one false move. It was a mistake to come. Better if I'd gone once to Vilnius and you had seen me on the street and we'd had a drink somewhere. But what's done is done. You and I are both on short leashes, and it's a single hand that holds us, you know what I mean—death. Listen carefully. We need you. They want you to be their man, but you'll be ours. There are fewer and fewer of ours around, every house is watched. But let them watch this house, we'll be watching you. And if anything happens, remember that we'll settle with you first. And forget about running away. If we have to, we'll find you even in Vilnius. I've talked too long with you, Yossele. But there's one thing you must never forget: you are alive while we're alive, out there in the forest or here in Ukshchai. Keep in mind one more thing: I won't be trusting you. And don't you trust me. I saw from the other room, through a crack, how you gave her a sign. For now, you've saved yourself. And that's why you are still sitting at this table and we can drink some more."

He poured for me, himself, Daugela, and Jana. She came over and drank with us, after crossing herself.

He left close to midnight. In the morning Daugela unlocked the door of that interior wall which led to the other half of the house and opened onto a small irregular room that had served us as a closet in the old days. In it was another door to the rooms we had lived in, a kitchen, and a corridor that ended in a private entrance off the street. But Daugela did not open the second door; in the empty closet he set up a cot he had brought in from the barn: this was where I was to live. To my question about whether it would be convenient for me to be crossing his entrance hall, Daugela answered gloomily, "Shut up, Yossele, the commander wants it that way." The commander had good reason: I would be constantly in sight, and the second, boarded-up entrance could not be used to leave or enter unnoticed. To all appearances free, I wound up living in a prison cell—and my prison itself had a double guard, the Greens and the police.

Stretched out on my cot for the first time, I spent a sleepless night. The horror of the situation I had suddenly landed in was so palpable there, in the silence and isolation, that I lay rigid, like a mummy on a sarcophagus or a petrified log, and if anyone that night could have observed me, he would have seen the glassy stare and gaping jaw of a dead man; he would not have heard my quiet, shallow breathing, and would have told himself it was a corpse, long without vital warmth, ready to decompose, and that it needed to be buried as soon as possible, there, in the ground beyond the pasture. The column of dark violet smoke above an ashen ribbon of fog with flashes of fire flaring out of its center hung in front of me, hung there billowing, broke, and moved off to the side—I stared at it that whole night.

I don't know whether I had a fever, but I didn't get out of bed in the morning. It may be that some instinct told my organism that in these first days I would do best to stay motionless, to be voiceless, helplessly weak, unfit for any activity, and so useless to anybody and in no way open to suspicion. This lasted about two weeks. Once the school's bookkeeper came to give Daugela money for my lodging and left my vacation pay. Out of the pay, once I was on my feet again, I gave Daugela the lion's share for my food, along with my ration cards. My landlord was satisfied. "You

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and I can always agree," he said, "but with them . . ."—he cursed, but who he had in mind was not clear; maybe he, like me, was cursing both camps which wouldn't let him live his own way, unhindered. I took to helping him with the housekeeping. I didn't want to languish idly, understanding that without something to do I would inevitably fall into thoughts of my terrifying existence in this no-man's-land, in the sights of unseen snipers positioned along both sides of a space in which it was easy to fire. I understood, too, that Daugela was in pretty much the same situation; still, he offered me a certain amount of defense. In his shadow I was more secure. I was in full view of them all. If I was with Daugela it meant that I was not with somebody else—not the police, not the Greens. And I dragged out with him to do the mowing, load the hay into the barn, cut firewood with the two-handed saw, and even repair the tile roof. For his part, he went with me to the town offices and then hired a horse to bring beams and fencing to the pasture, and together we built a fence there.

Jana pined for Vladas. He would steal into the house at twilight, stay till dawn, and leave. Sometimes he would sit in the bedroom for days at a time, evidently hiding out because it was getting to be more dangerous elsewhere than it was in the house. Daugela kept muttering something about the two of them, until I finally understood: she was pregnant. Conversations began with Vladas; Daugela grumbled, Vladas usually said nothing or barked annoyance, but Jana wept more often and longer as time went on, and that drove Vladas crazy. At length he gave in. They took Jana somewhere and a priest secretly married them. She came back glowing with happiness, a strong, dark-haired beauty whose face radiated so much life, energy, and passion that when I happened to glance at her I was quick to turn away, and Daugela would shake his head and say to me: "That Vladas there is the Devil himself! He got us all, and what will become of the girl now?"

That same night they celebrated the wedding. Vladas came to my room and said: "We're civilized people. Jana says that you should be invited." His whole detachment showed up—in uniforms, with rifles and backpacks. It looked as if they were about to move off to other parts. The Greens had been under pressure lately, many had perished, their safe houses were discovered one after another. Perhaps Vladas's wedding was their challenge to fate. There was something I would now call mystical in that gathering behind closed shutters, in the silent drunkenness of the Green fighting men holding their rifles between their knees. They wanted to sing old marching songs and sent Daugela out to the street to watch and listen. Their songs were all sad ones. "Past the high hills, past the deep seas," they sang, "a soldier lies, a soldier lies, buried in the earth. His mother comes, she brings a shirt, Get up, my son, I've brought your shirt, get up my son, I've brought your shirt.—Away with you, mother, and take the shirt, my head aches where the sword struck it, my heart aches where the bullet struck it." Or: "A father raised his son, he cherished him like God's tree in the garden." The song went on to tell how soldiers came and took him with them: "Oh, my son, my dearest, and when will you come to stay with us again?—When the stones on the river-bottom float on the waves, father. . . . "

Then Vladas ordered Jana to sing. There was a sudden silence, and I understood even before I heard her that they knew what to expect. Her voice was as beautiful as she was, and a power from some deep source welled up in it. She sang quietly, which lent her songs a strange and melancholy charm: "Ai, cuckoo, do not sing at dawn, repeat not that the night is short. Ai, young one, do not cry so bitterly, nor shed those doleful tears. And do not wring your hands so fair, the green hedge is green no more. . . . " Then she sang about an orphan girl: "Ah, woe is me and bitter my grief. Had I but my mother by me to defend me; but my mother lies on the high hill this many a year, under the yellow sand, and like fairy silver the morning dew sparkles on her grave." This was clearly her favorite, and I was later to hear her half-sing, half-hum it many times.

In the middle of the night they left, Vladas with them, thinking that they had finished celebrating the wedding—but there was another, and a bloody one, and it lasted until morning and then through the morning, and the whole town turned out to meet the procession, a long series of carts, a whole wedding train, with a bridegroom in each cart, and the bride of each was the same, and she was old, toothless, and bony, and the smile beneath the flowered ribbons on her brow was hideous, but she had taken all the best young men and the marriage bed she laid them on was a plank covered with hay, and each was sprinkled with crimson blood as if with holy water. There was moaning and wailing in the streets as women rushed among the wagons trying to recognize their sons, husbands, and brothers; they swarmed, shouting and cursing, and the soldiers dragged them away, threatened them with their rifles, to keep them away from the dead—and all this had been callously orchestrated so that by their signs of hysterical grief the families and friends of the Greens who had been shot that night could be identified.

Like all the others, Jana started to rush out of the yard to see if her man was there. Daugela and I hung on her arms like dogs on a she-wolf; she began to vomit, and we managed to lead her back indoors. Daugela went off and returned an hour later looking grim. He opened Jana's door a crack and shouted from the corridor: "Wipe your eyes in there, your man got away, with one other, they say. This time, anway. . . . " He swore, added "Christ!" and crossed himself carefully. Over vodka he said to me: "We're both done for. Vladas

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may spare me, I'm his father-in-law, the grandfather of his child. But if the other side knows about the wedding, they'll finish me off. As for our men, they'll kill you; they need to shed blood in revenge. Somebody betrayed them, they'll decide it was you. Too bad he got away. We might have been able to breathe at last. . . . " Daugela seemed not even to be considering the fate of his daughter, her passion and suffering, so great was his hatred for Vladas and his terror of him.

For two weeks Ukshchai was quiet. People were waiting for something. It was the end of August and the school year would soon be beginning, but I appeared to have been forgotten. Time seemed suspended. But on the rainy morning of the twenty-eighth a line of covered trucks rolled past us toward the other end of town. Soon word began to filter back from there: they were carting people off, whole families, with such possessions as they could get together in an hour and carry themselves. Under the same monotonously beating rain the trucks with their soaked tarpaulins began coming back, headed toward Shaulai. Daugela went constantly to the neighbors for news; no sooner had he returned than he went out again. By evening they'll be here, he estimated. They were taking whomever they suspected of being in contact with the Greens; for the twenty dead men they had already picked up something like a hundred families, and even a fool could see that, just as four years ago, they were purging the city, leaving only the intimidated and the cowering, those who were ready to serve the Soviet authorities unhesitatingly. Daugela had begun preparing early. He had decided to send Jana to a relative, an old woman who lived off by herself in a half-collapsed hut. Daughter and father bowed their heads, said a prayer, kissed, and Jana went out. On the next day she was to go to her older sister's farm. Daugela drank, and by the time they knocked at the door he was more than a little fuddled. Four men entered, three in secret-police uniforms, and with them the local chief of police.

The chief looked at them and gestured at me: "Yankelevichus—the one I told you about."

"Right, good," said the senior officer; he was wearing a major's insignia. "All the same, your passport, please. It's routine," he added half-apologetically.

I took out my passport, they glanced at it, and the major said in an official tone that I was not subject to deportation.

"Citizen Daugela, you and your daughter Janina have an hour to get your things together. It's now 5:20. You will be ready at 6:15."

"Jana," Daugela said and sank onto a chair. "You hear, Joseph?"

"Why isn't she here? Get her," said the major, and two of his men moved quickly into the corridor. You could hear the banging of doors and the opening of cabinets. Something clattered to the floor. Daugela sighed, mumbled indistinctly, and passed his fingers through his matted hair. He was in bad shape, and when the two returned empty-handed he was unable to explain where his daughter had gone. Maybe he was playing the fool. While they were going over him I asked the police chief why they needed Janina, and he answered curtly: the whole family bears responsibility. They pulled Daugela to his feet and led him away, the room emptied.

My first crazy thought was to flee. If I stayed alone in the house, a single shot through the window would do it. Some sixth sense told me that Vladas was not far off. I made myself calm down and think. Daugela's sack and suitcase were still here on the floor. That meant they'd all be coming back any minute, they'd drop Jana off and let her get her things together, too. This encouraged me a little; I was being given a reprieve of sorts. But when night came I would be absolutely without defense, for the first time in all these days. Without Daugela or Jana, nothing would hold Vladas back, he'd be glad to finish me off at long last. It would be a blow against the Soviets: *Take that . . . one more corpse for you . . . you thought you'd beaten us, but we are alive . . . we are everywhere . . . and the proof is this dead young Jewboy, a spy and a traitor.* I all but saw myself lying on that floor. And what does it matter that they'll catch Vladas in the end, shoot him or hang him—what difference could that make to me then? As for Jana, she'll disappear somewhere in Siberia with that wolf-cub in her womb, or maybe she'll give birth—and I felt a certain spiteful pleasure at the thought: that would be a revenge on Vladas for my parents and for me, his child growing up an orphan, like myself. I pictured Jana with the infant in her arms—and it made me sick to think I could ever have wished evil to two human beings, innocent and unfortunate like myself.

My head was splitting from this madness, from the general horror that was flooding everything around me, like the rain that kept pouring from the sky and turning everything into slush, darkness, scum, mud, and that set me trembling, piercing me through—me, who had been caught up in this cold wet sticky bloody mess. I ran with my shirt clinging to my body, sockless, first along the street, then, veering off through the vegetable plots, until, breathless, with a hoarse and scarcely audible cry, I staggered into the old woman's cabin, to find them already there.

"No, don't touch her," I shouted. "Let the child alone . . . what's it to you . . . let her go!" I rushed up to Jana, grabbed her by the arm, and for some reason began to shake it—either to make her say something or to make her keep quiet—I was out of my mind and could only keep repeating, as in a fever, "Don't touch her . . . there's a baby! . . ."

They put us in a jeep. On the way they picked up Daugela's things. They stopped somewhere again; Daugela got into

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the back of the truck and I never saw him again. Then they drove up to the house of Fisher, the doctor, who had like me recently returned to Ukshchai where he had practiced before the war and from which he had been mobilized as a soldier. We took him along to the clinic and Fisher led Jana away. I sat on a bench like someone who had been arrested, between the major and the police chief. When Fisher and Jana returned, she was staggering. Her glance wandered absently, then stopped on me, and I read in it hate, fear, and the shame she had just undergone—but something else, too, a desire to ask me something or tell me something.

The doctor said: "Over ten weeks. There is absolutely no doubt." For some reason he looked at me. My companions on the bench stood up. So did I, and I noticed that they, too, were looking at me mistrustfully and astonished, while the major was smiling sardonically. Suddenly I understood, and felt my face flush: they had decided that I must be the father of the baby, I who had rushed to the old woman's to get Jana away from her, to save her and the baby she would bear from being deported! In this wild surmise I glanced deliberately at Jana, our eyes met, and suddenly, without looking away from me, she began to laugh hysterically, punctuating the laughter with sobs, moans, shouts, and throat spasms that threatened to choke her. Nausea overcame her and she slumped toward the floor; Fisher caught her and managed to sit her down on the bench. She almost lost consciousness. "You'll have to take her by car," Fisher announced. The major shrugged and said wearily, as if he were sick of the whole business: "All right, to hell with them, we'll cross her name off." He glanced at me again and there was something salacious—I could understand it now—in the way he smirked.

As soon as the doctor and I got Jana into the house, she broke away from us—God knows where that sudden strength came from—and dashed into her bedroom, where she burst into loud tears. The doctor left. I locked the door behind him and put the key in my pocket; I didn't bother with the bolt. I turned off the lights and sat down on a stool in the corner. I was afraid to lie in my own bed, afraid to sit at the table, afraid to move, afraid even to breathe. I wanted only one thing—that it all be over as soon as possible, and I knew I would not have long to wait. Janina quieted down. I was sure that she was not sleeping either, and that like me she had fallen silent in expectation and terror. My clothes were soaked, my teeth began to chatter. I sat in the dark one hour, another, probably many, and it was already the middle of the night. The rain continued to pour down. Suddenly through its monotonous beating I sensed a different sound and got up from the stool on legs that were weak and shaking. The doorknob clicked and turned, and the door itself slowly swung open. From where I was standing it hid the person entering. I didn't wait for him to come out from behind it.

"Come on in, it's all clear," I said, amazed that I could speak and that I'd had the wit not to call him by name and so reveal my wariness.

With a single movement he slammed the door shut and appeared before me, his rifle aimed at my stomach. His shadow covered the faint outline of the window. It was pitch dark in my corner, but the whites of his eyes were phosphorescent like a werewolf's.

"That's right, Yossele, I've come for you," he whispered, panting. "I see you've been expecting me. Don't be afraid of the rifle. I'll only shoot if you try something. Otherwise, I'll just cut your throat or choke you. You can't avoid it, little Jew, but for now calm down and stop shaking. *Speak, you motherfucker, when did they take them away?*"

Vladas, Vladas, she's in the bedroom, go to her!" I cried in a cracked voice, sniffling to mask a sob I could not hold back.

He started, turned, and with a crouching wolf-like movement, a blacker spot in the darkness, glided to where Jana was. I heard her scream. Once again I sat on my stool in the corner, waiting. And when I saw his shadow, I rose again on buckling legs. Jana came out, too—I could see the whiteness of her nightgown. And then I had a vision—I was sure it was a vision: Vladas had knelt down in front of me. I staggered back.

"Forgive me," he said in a hoarse half-whisper which struck my ears as if he had shouted. I stood there numb and mute. "It seems God sent you."

He made the sign of the cross and stood up. As if in a trance he began muttering chaotically.

"Who knows how all this will end. . . . They won't take me alive. Save Jana. The child will be born. May God bless you. We once lived in peace—remember—damn it to hell!" He turned suddenly to Jana. "Be careful, Janina, I'll hold you responsible for everything if I live. You, too, Yossele, remember! Pray for me now!"

And he vanished out the door. Jana and I stood in the darkness. The rain drummed on. . . .

It was still pouring that morning when they knocked on the door: I was wanted at the police station. The chief had some questions. How did I happen to get involved with Janina? I thought for a moment and answered that we had known each other since childhood. Strange, he said—doesn't she have a fiancé? I replied that she didn't, or at least I didn't know. And who is Vladas? I don't know, I said. What do you mean, said the chief, if you remember your life before the war you ought to remember Vladas. Ah, you mean the Vladas from before the war? I asked. There was one. I remember. And you haven't seen him here—at Daugela's, for instance? No, I said, I haven't. Here he leaned across the table and asked sharply: "Speak! What do you

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know about the wedding?" I told him I knew nothing about any wedding. "At night, at Daugela's, two weeks ago," he insisted. I looked at him, pretending not to understand; it couldn't have been very convincing. My heart was pounding: they knew all about it! How would I know, I began, trying to sound unconcerned, if there was a wedding or if there wasn't? I'm an outsider. Daugela was afraid of me. At night I'm asleep. Here the chief interrupted: "With his daughter, right?"—and there was a derision in his voice. I looked at him playfully. "Sometimes," I replied, and grinned insolently.

"All right," said the chief, "have it your way, Yankelevich. We're not in a hurry. Go on living as you have been. In a week we'll be opening the school and you'll be starting your work there. We'll be doing our work, too. And don't think you can stay out of it. I don't like your story, damn but I don't like it!"

I should have said nothing. Instead, like a fool I asked, "What story?"

"Yankelevich!" He leaned toward me again with a contemptuous expression: "The doctor wrote, 'Pregnant ten weeks.' You've been here less than two months. . . ."

I sat in silence. Why he didn't arrest me I don't know. It may be he had no appetite for new complications after the events of yesterday, and even earlier—two weeks ago. And then, he himself had kept me here in Ukshchai. To accuse me of deceiving the authorities and aiding the Greens would amount to putting his mistake on record. He was soon replaced. They said he'd been promoted, but it could be that he was simply trying to avoid the trouble he saw coming.

In the mornings I began going to my work in the school. I would return for the midday meal. Jana put food on the table; during the day she usually avoided eating with me. But when suppertime found me sitting in my room, correcting papers or reading, she would have to call me. "Supper," she called through the door, and I would go into the common room, take my place at one end of the table while she sat down at the other, and thus, in visible alienation and silence, we would savor the evening meal together. Then I would say, "Thanks, goodnight," she would wish me the same, and I would go back to my room. On Sundays I would do things around the house. After all, I was a trained worker and knew how to handle tools. I repaired and fixed things up in the barn, the yard, and the house; at such times we might speak, when there was some matter to decide about. In general there isn't a lot of talking in peasant families. We were probably living very much as husbands and wives were living in the other houses, with the sole difference that we slept not in a double bed but separately, each in his own room, and without the usual caresses of married life.

The fact that we shunned each other was natural. It was not only her pregnancy or her passionate, tormented longing for Vladas that stood between us. There was a whole wall of piled-up fears, firmly cemented with blood. She was the wife of my parents' murderer and it was his baby she was carrying, as I reminded myself whenever I caught myself looking at her. And she, of course, was aware of it, too. She had her own score to settle with me besides: the disasters had started with my arrival—the destruction of Vladas's troop and perhaps of him as well, the taking away of Daugela, all this was connected with me, and she would never believe that it was not my fault. I might have repeated as much as I liked that I was not a stool-pigeon, pointing out that I had purposely stayed in view the whole time, that I did not wish them evil and had even rushed to save her—none of it would have helped, for the simple reason that I had a right to revenge, I carried retribution by the very fact of my existence, and my arrival in Ukshchai was already a sign of God's punishment, which was why Vladas felt a need to be rid of me and, by annihilating me, to get rid of the avenging sword that hung over him since the time he first began to kill. I remembered how, when he knelt before me, and crossing himself and looking at me, said that it was God who had sent me, a genuine horror flickered in his eyes. He felt then—not, perhaps, for the first time, but then particularly—that he could not kill me, that there was no getting rid of me, that there was a powerful force constraining him and that I, a defenseless creature, was protected by that force while he, on the contrary, was vulnerable and open to that lethal blade glinting in the clouds. And now that I remained alone with Jana I held the same place in her consciousness: I was a reminder, I was unwrought vengeance, threat, warning, punishment, and destruction. I was my murdered father—and I was a savior. I was also childhood. I was the beginning of secret urges, there, among the bushes by the river where we innocently shed our clothes. I was a witness. I was the spy of the illicit love of her older sister with the man who later penetrated her own womb, to conceive in it a child that I had saved. And I was now the one she fed, serving me food like a wife; and I was the one who, like a husband, supported her and the child, bringing home the wages of a breadwinner.

We got throught the winter and I was waiting for her to give birth. Without once speaking of it to each other, we both understood that after the birth of the infant I would have to make an attempt to flee. The child was born, and Jana's older sister met her on the way home from the hospital, carrying a little boy. She returned to the house with an inflammation of the lungs. Five or so days later Fisher said it was possible Jana might not survive. Her milk had not appeared; besides, in a state of fever and

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delirium she was in no condition to nurse. I fetched milk and bottle-fed the infant. He too was on the point of dying. And, of course, she called him, "Vladas, Vladas"—or was it her husband she was calling? I asked myself what business of mine all this was. And I went on to say, let them both perish, she and the child, that sucking, excreting, crying chunk of her and Vladas's flesh. Why had the torment fallen to me to live their suffering, let it end—ha! I won't give her the medicine, won't bring her drink, won't put cold compresses on her forehead, won't feed the baby—why should I when her own sister doesn't, choosing to return to her own children instead, and the neighbors who shun us won't? So let come what will, of its own accord, without my involvement or complicity. . . . When my imagination ran that way I would begin to feel nauseated and I would take the bottle, babble babytalk in my shame and self-loathing, and set about caring for that two-week-old creature.

She didn't feed her baby, it was I who fed him. And the fact that what had happened to her was past correcting crushed something in her. When she had recovered completely, she would gaze long and quizzically at Vladas, but when the time came to give him his bottle, she easily ceded that function to me, particularly since the infant fed better in my more familiar arms. At that point I was afraid to take any steps toward leaving. Besides, spring was not yet over, and having missed many days of teaching because of Jana's illness and the infant's, I had to make up the required lessons. So there was no thinking of anything before summer. But summer came, and with it something else.

Jana and I were in the barn, in the loft, where we had raked the last of the hay into a pile in order to pitch it down for the cows. We had worked hard, and resting now, leaning on the rake, I gazed through the barn door into the yard, where the baby in his pram was sleeping in the sun. When I turned, I saw Jana looking at me—with melancholy and some indescribable expression that could have meant any number of things. She took a step toward me; we touched; heat and weakness enveloped us; we sank down into the hay where we stood, and from languor our passion turned into such an unexpected frenzy that afterward we gazed at each other in terror. What had taken place filled us both with fear. Even afterward, never once did we feel free and easy. Everything separated us—not only that third person who was her husband, but all the rest that was interdiction, blood, and fear, an almost visible onlooker to our sinful caresses that made them bitter, incomplete, repellent, and enticing. A month could go by filled with her melancholy and unwillingness to have me come to her; but there could also come a week of madness, when she would bite her fingers to keep the passion I had requited from issuing in a moan. By nineteen I had lost my virginity, but Jana was the first woman to show me what sensuality, what the strength of male desire can be. Her reserve and something like a fire hidden at the center of her, which always showed in her face as a kind of haughty beauty, would, when she made love, sweep her will aside and issue in such a storm of feeling that I was left speechless, awestruck, beside myself. This was something I could not give up.

But she fled me, and there were evenings when her eyes, seeing mine full of desire, would shine not with love but with hate, and I knew the danger I was in. A wolf, I repeated to myself at those times, her Vladas is a wolf who is wandering in the forests not far away, and she senses that, and could bring him here with a single howl at any moment. It isn't me she loves but that wild dog; it's him she thinks about when she lies in my arms. Like a she-wolf she tracks me and lures me; I am in her lair, and our love is only a means to weaken and drain the victim. But when Jana would again give herself to me, when I was drunk with her and happy, then I would repeat to myself that she was giving herself in gratitude, as a reward and an expiation, that she had entrusted herself to me as she had her child, and that I had a right to accept this gift and enjoy her love without fear or second thoughts. In fact, hatred and gratitude seethed inside her in a wild mixture, and I knew it at the time. And I knew even better that had I, young Yossele, grown up with her in this place, had there never been a war, or Germans, or Russians, or Reds, or Greens, but just an ordinary long quiet life in Ukshchai—Jana could never have come to love me.

The boy grew. When I came home from school he flew, sometimes tripping and bruising himself on the way, to meet papa—he called me papa and her Jana. And there was an undeniable significance in that. The more I told him, "That's mama," the more stubbornly he insisted on calling her Jana. Everything he found lacking in his mother he was eager to take from me. He almost wouldn't let her hold him. He crept into my bed to sleep. He saw—or rather, felt—our estrangement, and he made his choice: if these two people around him were not together, then he had to be with one of them and the boy constantly made the same choice—papa. As for me, I loved them both, and the more time passed the easier it got to forget the past. On the pasture outside our windows, where a cow grazed, bushes I had planted were growing by the fence, covering the grave, and that was a confirmation that all the evil was receding, that life was reasserting its rights, and that, perhaps, happiness was possible on this unhappy, mutilated, and torn-up ground that was so dear to me and had now become dearer still—with this pasture and house, with the child and the woman, with the children in that school where I was teaching them to write and speak

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Russian—"No slaves are we, we are no slaves. . . ."

I closed my eyes to many things. Even by 1949 they hadn't yet been able to destroy the Greens, though the handwriting on the wall was clear enough. In May word began to spread that there was unrest again in our area. Once, walking into the teachers' room, I heard the name "Vladas," but when they saw me, the people talking fell silent. At home that afternoon I didn't attach any importance to the fact that Jana seemed more uneasy than usual, taking and squeezing the boy to her, then holding him at arm's length and regarding his little face intently. Now and again she would hum her song, "Ah, woe is me. . . ." Till evening I sat in my room correcting papers, then we sat down to supper. As always, Jana sat at the far end of the table, the three-year-old Vladas to my right. There was a mug—a big clay mug with roosters on the sides—that only I drank out of. It was filled with milk. Vladas, with a sly glance at me, stretched toward it, took it in his two little hands, started to drink, and after a few swallows began to gasp hoarsely. And I heard a wild howling cry—it came from Jana, who rushed over to us, her mouth agape, and with enormous fingers stretched forward, knocked over the mug. I leapt up; it seemed to me she was trying to suffocate the infant—she was shaking him and holding his head down. I shouted something and heard in reply:

"I poisoned . . . your milk . . . it's poisoned!" I hit her in the stomach; she let the child go and, sobbing, sank down onto the table. I knew that Fisher was not in town, that it was late, and that there was no one in the clinic. There was a hospital in a village five miles away; there would be doctors on duty even at night—but whom could I call for help? Who had a horse or a car? Who would go with me? I feared losing precious time trying to find and persuade someone, and ran out onto the road. The boy's face had turned ashen and his breathing was labored. I was in bad shape myself—my right lung worked poorly ever since Daugela had broken my two ribs—and after running all the way to the hospital and explaining that the boy was poisoned, I lost consciousness.

They managed to save him. I spent the night in the hospital, and in the morning I left. I walked along the same road I had run down the evening before, but when I came to the crossroads I turned not in the direction of Ukshchai, but toward Shaulai. It was here that I had crawled out of the hay and jumped down from the cart four years ago. It occurred to me that even now they might shoot at me. I looked off to the side—by the little wood the fresh morning fog hugged the ground; in it you could see crimson sparks, and a column of dense purple smoke rose up, broke there, over the treetops, and stretched out horizontally. . . .

It so happened that after finishing the university and working two years in Vilnius, I found myself riding down that same road. We young specialists were being sent all over Lithuania to lecture, and I was heading in a government car to some club where I was scheduled to speak. I didn't know what route they would take, and didn't at first realize that we were on the outskirts of Ukshchai, but when we entered the town I said to the driver, "How about a bite of something?" We stopped in front of a tavern, went in, and ordered two beers. A minute later the waitress returned, looking at me with alarm. "Someone's asking for you," she said and nodded at the bar. I rose and went over to where a large, fat, and almost bald man in greasy overalls was standing. He spoke without lifting his head or showing me his face, looking down to the side.

"Don't say my name. Why have you come here? I don't know where you are living or who you are working for. And I don't give a damn. I also don't know whether you gave us away or not, and I don't give a damn about that either. What do you want this time? She slept with you, that's what I know, you bastard. And if you don't get the hell out of here this minute, if you ever, even once, show up here again. . . ."

I stepped away, nodded to my driver, and we drove on.

How he wound up in America I have no idea. But now, reading the letters that come to me and listening here in holy Jerusalem to a policeman's fine words about justice, I find myself thinking: let others convict Vladas. I find myself thinking that if I went and testified against him, he would say to himself, "Yes, it was a mistake not to kill Yossele, he's just like me, even now he's looking for revenge, even now he wants my death." In his eyes I, the man he had spared, coming now to make sure that *he got his,* would turn out to be no different from him. All these years I have remained a living refutation of his rule, "Kill or be killed!" Now, by appearing in court, I would only be proving how right that rule had been after all . . . .

So let the trial in Chicago take place without me. Let the purple column of smoke billow up again, but without me.

April 1984
Tal-El, Galilee

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Books in Review

Athens vs. Sparta

THE OUTBREAK OF THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR (*391 pp., $42.50, 1969*); THE ARCHIDAMIAN WAR (*367 pp., $39.50, 1974*); THE PEACE OF NICIAS AND THE SICILIAN EXPEDITION (*372 pp., $39.50, 1981*); THE FALL OF THE ATHENIAN EMPIRE (*426 pp., $39.50, 1987*). By DONALD KAGAN. *Cornell University Press.*

Reviewed by EDWARD N. LUTTWAK

IMAGINE that the only contemporary record of most events of World War II had been written by a well-known general on the losing side, seriously at odds with his own people—a Rommel, say, though of philosophical disposition, moral clarity, evident compassion, and altogether superior intellect. Such a Rommel would be an incomparably greater man than his real-life prototype, but as a historical source his shortcomings would still be most severe. Because of the inevitable limits of his knowledge of a complicated and protracted war, many events would escape his scrutiny in the whole or in detail; because of the unconscious partisanship induced by his origins and fate, further events would be subtly or less subtly distorted; and given the great variety of polities, customs, and procedures he would have to cover, still other events would be obscured by confusions technical, topographic, or even political. Finally, there would be a partiality entirely deliberate, caused by the author's selection of what he deemed most important, thereby slighting other facts perhaps only circumstantial and ephemeral yet still integral to the web of events.

Now imagine that despite his shortcomings, this vastly enhanced Rommel had written a history of World War II of such surpassing merit in every way that it caused all other contemporary accounts to be abandoned without trace, keeping subsequent historians in its thrall thematically, factually, and stylistically, and indeed defining the very task of writing history.

What would we then *know* of World War II? As it is, the gap between the texts—official histories included—that now fill our libraries and the findings of the latest documentary research is becoming embarrassingly wide, so that reputations once secure are now greatly diminished by recent scholarship while others have been greatly elevated; various events once supposed to have been inevitable are now revealed as adventitious, and vice versa; and the Holocaust is slowly emerging as the central event of Hitler's war, but less and less a purely German crime. What colossal mystifications would be uncovered, what sort of sweeping reappraisal of causes and modalities would be necessary, if till now the only record of what happened between 1939 and 1945 had been a single book by our transfigured Rommel?

That, in short, is more or less our condition vis-à-vis the Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta, which lasted from 431 to 404 B.C.E. and resulted in the transfer of hegemony over Greece from Athens to Sparta. But in the case of the Peloponnesian War there are no archives to redeem our dependence on Thucydides, son of Olorus, born around 460 B.C.E., one of ten generals elected in 424, thereafter exiled from Athens for twenty years, and the author of the great *History* of the war that breaks off abruptly in the year 411.

One very simple solution to our difficulties would be to adopt the view already sanctioned by many of our most expensive universities and to treat the *History* of Thucydides as just one more text among many, of inevitably modest importance alongside the writings of every age and culture. We could, moreover, cheerfully overlook its limitations as a source by agreeing that the warfare it records among Athens, Sparta, and even pettier town-states two-and-a-half millennia ago was of no greater importance than, say, African tribal struggles, Aztec slave-raiding expeditions, the Mogul invasion of the Deccan, or the contemporaneous strife of the Chinese warring states. Since none of these episodes is anywhere nearly so well documented as the Peloponnesian War, historiographical egalitarianism would surely compel us to research them first, rather than striving for further clarifications of the minor details of a war so remote in time, and materially so insignificant.

But even though no human culture should be alien to us, and curiosity about the past, regardless of what ensued from it, needs no justification, it is simply foolish to deny that the history of the Greeks before, during, and after the Peloponnesian War is of incomparably greater significance than the deeds of Aztecs, African tribes, Moguls, or ancient Chinese—and precisely because of what ensued from that history. Instead of surviving only as a passive residue, of great scholarly and antiquarian interest perhaps but no more, the record of what a few Greeks said and did so long ago still resonates vibrantly in our own day—and not least for Latin Americans, Africans, Indians, and Chinese. The comedies of the Greeks make us laugh and their tragedies make us weep, we know their names and even their feelings as we share in their great events, glorious victories, crushing defeats, or agonized debates. But it is above all the ideas of those 5th-century Greeks that are so completely alive for us.

Our own schools and universi-

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ties may now be subjected to a regime of cultural relativism,* but polite pretense or academic perversity cannot alter the primacy of the culture that invented the three ideas which are still instructing, inspiring, and conquering minds all over the planet: the idea of science—that is, the quest for rational explanations by refutable hypothesis, invented by the ancient Greeks alone and by no one else; the idea of democracy and its concomitant, the priority of freedom as the greatest happiness, most famously expressed by Pericles in the funeral oration which Thucydides reports (or improves), but concretely manifest in the detailed political practices he records; and the idea of the individual personality as a universe of consciousness, rather than as a mere fragment of some imposed collectivity, whether tribe, nation, civic community, or family, whether caste, faith, class, or party.

These three intertwined ideas, more subversive today than ever before of every form of political, ideological, religious, and social oppression, are autonomously living forces. Simply because they arose in that place and time, the Peloponnesian War is far more than another historical episode among many. Because all three ideas pervade and find within the *History* of Thucydides their finest expression, that text is far more than just another text among many.

And this is the text that has been the subject of the twenty-year labors of Donald Kagan, long-time professor of history and classics at Yale. In four volumes and 1,556 pages (not counting appendices, bibliographies, and indices), of which the last has recently been published, Kagan contends with Thucydides as a historical source while incidentally displaying for us Thucydides the philosopher of life and continuing master of our thoughts.

To build the edifice of a coherent and more comprehensive history of the Peloponnesian War around the incomplete and often cryptic text of Thucydides, Kagan has employed several methods.

First, he has made the fullest use of all other contemporary sources, poor as they are. In the comedies of Aristophanes, for example, there are only hints and jocular references to the events and personalities of the war. But because these plays were performed for a public that included many who actually took part in those events and knew those personalities quite intimately, authenticity is uniquely guaranteed: had Aristophanes been inaccurate, his audience would have missed the joke and his parodic intention would have misfired. Kagan extracts what he can from this source,

* My thirteen-year-old son, unprompted, complains that he is not allowed to study the Greeks and Romans. Chinese history, he tells me, is "boring"—as it would be when taught by one also forced to teach about Aztecs and Indians, Africans and Arabs, while lacking the insight into those cultures that in the case of Greeks and Romans percolates from all directions even into the crassest mind.

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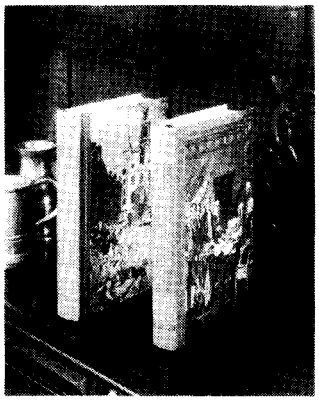

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which many previous scholars have simply overlooked. Similarly, he strives to use fragments from the speeches of Andocines the companion of Alcibiades, and of Lysias the orator (whose views do not appear to have been mechanically conditioned by the fact that his family owned a shield factory), and from Plato, who as it happens is of remarkably little use though he was over twenty when the war ended.

Xenophon (born c. 430 B.C.E.), an experienced soldier, a late-phase participant in the war, and a prolific writer, could have been the ideal author of a competing version of the war from a pro-Spartan perspective; though he was an Athenian, it was Sparta that gained his loyalty, and kept it even after later defeat at the hands of Thebes. As it was, though, Xenophon must have been one of the first to be dissuaded from emulating his predecessor by the immensity of the latter's achievement. (Others did write, but in competition with Thucydides their works could not attract enough interest to ensure survival—only the names of such lost authors have been preserved.) In his *Hellenika,* Xenophon merely tries to continue where Thucydides left off in 411 B.C.E., and the book's shortcomings (glaring distortions, worse omissions) are so severe that Kagan follows all modern historians in preferring the account of a later anonymous historian recovered in 1906 from papyrus, as well as much later authors.

There are also some contemporary inscriptions, though many fewer than would be the case for, say, the Roman empire, where the abundance of surviving epigraphic material allows the reconstruction of entire decades of history without a single narrative source. For 5th-century Greece the most notable epigraphs are the Athenian Tribute Lists, which record the voluntary and involuntary affiliates of that peculiar empire. Cut in stone or scratched on pieces of broken pottery (*ostraka*), the inscriptions that survive, mostly in fragments, cannot tell stories, but they do provide factual reference points for Kagan's account, sometimes invaluably.

SECOND, Kagan has been bold in his use of the later writings of antiquity. Diodorus the Sicilian (Siculus), author of the *Bibliotheke Historike,* a world history in forty books, lived at the time of Julius Caesar some four centuries after Pericles. He was, moreover, a rather uncritical compiler of previous texts. But because among his sources were earlier writers who in turn had access to solid evidence, Kagan uses what he can of the fifteen surviving volumes (which fortunately include the period 480-323 B.C.E.), just as he carefully extracts bits and pieces from the unreliable biographies of Cornelius Nepos, the military anecdotes of Frontinus (1st century C.E.), the abridged history of the still later Justinus, and so forth, and also consults Aristotle, who was of course much closer in time to the war but otherwise preoccupied.

Even bolder because altogether larger is Kagan's use of Plutarch, who lived half a millennium after the events of the war, and under a Roman imperial autocracy in many ways more different from the age of Pericles than are our own days of turbulence and freedom. Worse, Plutarch's *Bioi paralleloi,* the "parallel lives" of eminent Romans and Greeks, are moral and psychological character studies rather than "life-and-times" biographies. Hence, historical events are described in them only incidentally, when they figure in illustrative anecdotes. For these reasons, Plutarch on Pericles, Alcibiades, Nicias, etc., has been little used by previous historians of the war.

Obviously Kagan relies on a particular statement in Plutarch only when he has no stronger corroboration, for otherwise he would not need so very late an author. But the reliability of Plutarch as a whole *can* be tested in detail, because some of his Roman lives at least are well documented in other texts of known reliability, and, even better, by epigraphic, numismatic, even archeological evidence. Unlike that other collection of biographies, the pseudonymous *Historia Augusta* so heavily followed by Gibbon and now condemned as hopelessly unreliable, Plutarch's Roman biographies have triumphantly survived systematic comparisons with the mass of new evidence; Kagan's wider reliance on him is thus solidly justified.

THIRD, Kagan is not afraid to evoke analogies, ancient and modern. Although they can provide no new facts they can offer explanations for facts unexplained, poorly explained, or even misrepresented in the primary sources—and in Thucydides most often. For even Thucydides, whose insistence on explanation defined the very nature of historiography (as against mere chronography), and whose honesty and insight are so inspiring—even Thucydides can nod, and his expertise too is not limitless.

That analogy is a dangerous device is clear enough, for it can easily serve to mislead. But Kagan does not employ analogies to persuade us; his purpose, rather, is to find new explanations, which he then offers in full for our own scrutiny. Thus, for example, in discussing the Athenian invasion of Aetolia in 426 B.C.E., Kagan invokes the analogy of Churchill's landings at Gallipoli to suggest that the Athenian strategy may have been sound even though this particular application of it failed. After pointing out that in 426 as in 1915, powerful alliances were stalemated in a war of attrition, Kagan quotes Churchill on the merits of surprise outflanking maneuvers as a path to victory that can "save slaughter." He then reproduces Churchill's list of the conditions under which even a secondary front can be a decisive theater (". . . if the strongest power cannot be directly defeated itself, but cannot stand without the weakest, it is the weakest that should be attacked"). Kagan then tests the circumstances of 426 B.C.E. by Churchill's criteria, and finds that the Aetolian operation, like the Gallipoli landings, *could* have been so successful as to justify the risk. The overall effect is illuminating and, to this reader at least, persuasive.

FOURTH, Kagan, a scholar of the classics, that most disciplined of disciplines, has also made complete use of the abundant modern research on the war, in French and Italian as well as German. On important points, the views of earlier historians are not merely cited but quoted, sometimes by the para-

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graph; without pedantic excess the terms of debate are defined, rival hypotheses deployed, criteria of selection established, and only then does Kagan present his own view. That view, moreover, is always sound, often subtle, and not infrequently original.

Finally, Kagan employs the information he derives from all four methods to extract more from Thucydides himself than any previous scholar. This is a text which ever since the 3rd century B.C.E. has been subjected to systematic editing, exegesis, and internal analysis. Work begun so well by the Hellenistic scholiasts of Alexandria—their "book" divisions, still followed in every modern edition, are the convenient length of a papyrus roll—was being continued by Byzantine commentators a thousand years later, and was resumed in the West as soon as a knowledge of Attic Greek was broadly revived in the 16th century. Kagan ably stands on the shoulders of all his predecessors, to construe more than ever before from the much-studied text.

ALTHOUGH I am not qualified to assess the validity of Kagan's choices when alternative theories are in contention, there are some things that even a nonspecialist can assert with confidence about his reconstruction of the Peloponnesian War.

This is above all a wonderfully attractive work. Once the reading begins, the four volumes seem not too long but too short; it was in the middle of the second volume that I began to dread the parting to come. Given the interest of the subject, only a poor style could dissuade, but Kagan's style is light and perfectly lucid, always elegant, never intrusive. For all its care and completeness, Kagan's careful scholarship does not at any point deprive us of the dramatic excitement which makes the reading of Thucydides himself as stirring as it is instructive.

It seems most unlikely that the fate of Kagan's four volumes will be settled once and for all by their current publication, for he too has written a work that will attract the continuing attention of future generations. In the meantime, to read these volumes is a delight not

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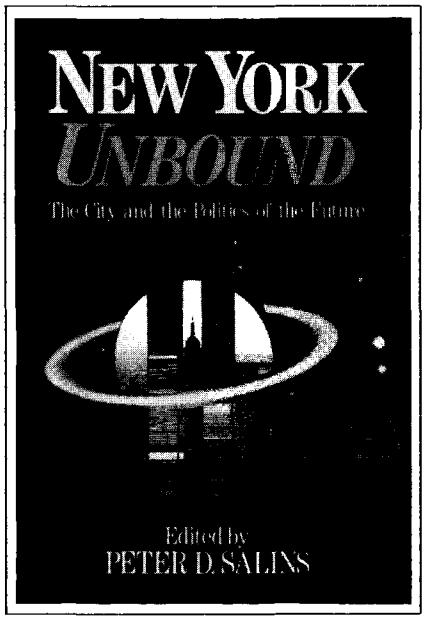

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Tradition and Change

RESPONSE TO MODERNITY: A HISTORY OF THE REFORM MOVEMENT IN JUDAISM. By MICHAEL A. MEYER. *Oxford University Press. 494 pp. $39.95.*

Reviewed by DAVID SINGER

IN *The Origins of the Modern Jew* (1967), Michael Meyer deftly described the initial encounter of European Jews with modern secular society. In his new book, a study of *the* quintessential modern movement within Jewish life, he shows us what that encounter has meant over the long haul.

Meyer is associated with Reform Judaism as a faculty member at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, but his book bears none of the marks of a potted institutional history. He presents the Reform movement in all its diversity and complexity, paying particular attention to the intellectual element without, however, slighting the institutional side. Meyer also consistently underscores the larger historical context in which Reform developed, pointing up the interplay with concurrent trends in both Jewish and general society. Finally, and most importantly, Meyer shows eminent good sense in his judgments, readily acknowledging the achievements of Reform but also facing up to its more problematic aspects. All in all, he has produced an important work of historical synthesis, one that will be cited for years to come.

Response to Modernity is organized along chronological lines, but with special emphasis on European origins. Reform Judaism had its first flowering in early 19th-century Germany, and Meyer points to several factors in accounting for this. One was that German Jews, caught up in an accelerating process of acculturation, felt "an incongruity between the world of their origins and the modern German and European world with which they identified and in which they longed to participate." Then again, the fact that German Jews were "neither wholly denied civil rights nor granted them completely" served as a spur to religious reform.

Still another important stimulus to the growth of Reform Judaism in Germany was the impact of the Protestant environment. Protestantism, Meyer notes,

> provided a model for theological . . . reformation, for the rejection of an old hierarchy, and for liturgy in the vernacular. Protestantism placed the sermon at the center of the service; it focused on words spoken and sung, not physical ritual acts; and as a religion which had itself revolted and developed further, it raised the hope that, in its liberal formulations, it would go far toward meeting Judaism on common religious ground.

Finally, Meyer points to the rise among German Jews of a "new religious leadership," a "sizable cadre of . . . secularly trained" rabbis conversant with modern critical scholarship. These men, unable to obtain academic positions in the larger society, turned to the Jewish community as a sphere for acting out their "conflicting intellectual and communal commitments."

But if Germany was the scene of Reform's first growth, the United States from the mid-19th century and onward was to be the place of its fullest development. Today, close to 30 percent of all American Jews identify as Reform, and over the past two decades Reform has been the fastest growing Jewish denomination.

As Meyer puts it in accounting for this success, the United States "lacked the obstacles that had lain in the path of European Reform while providing an environment which could scarcely have been more conducive." Most important in this context, of course, was the religious freedom that America accorded its citizens. In addition, Reform Judaism in America did not carry a stigma of "rebellion against long-established traditions and against an entrenched rabbinical leadership," since traditional Judaism was barely in evidence in the United States when Reform arrived on the scene. Indeed, among the early Jewish settlers in America, "disregard for Jewish observance was rampant and mixed marriage not infrequent." On the positive side, Meyer points out, the Reform movement's emphasis on "individual authority in religious matters" fitted in well with the individualistic strain of the American ethos. Moreover, Reform's sense of mission—the obligation to spread ethical monotheism—was quite compatible with the open-ended view of American destiny that was characteristic of the United States in the 19th century.

Response to Modernity is extremely useful in exploding a number of negative myths that still cling to Reform. Thus, Meyer makes it clear that the early Reform rabbis did not cause the initial rupture between Jews and traditional Judaism. On the contrary, it was because that rupture had already occurred—with sizable groups of Central and West European Jews moving away from traditional patterns of religious observance and belief—that early Reform was able to find an audience. Moreover, Meyer indicates, calls for religious change had less to do with a conscious pandering to Gentile opinion—although this sometimes entered the picture—than with the fact that European Jews had begun to internalize the religious and cultural values of the larger society.

Still another myth is the notion that Reform Judaism in Germany was particularly "un-Jewish." In truth, Meyer shows, German Reform was far more respectful of Jewish tradition than was its American counterpart; it was in the United States that "radical" Reform came into its own. Finally, with regard to the American Reform movement itself, Meyer disposes of the idea that it was consistently anti-Zionist prior to the creation of the state of Israel. By 1935, Reform in America had moved to a position of official neutrality on Zionism, with a pro-Zionist majority increasingly holding sway.

WHAT makes Reform the paradigmatic modern Jewish movement is

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its attempt to have Jews live simultaneously in two cultures. This is, indeed, the master theme of modern Jewish history, but it was first introduced into Jewish life by Reform, a movement which from its very inception was committed, in Meyer's words, to an "ideology of integrating tradition with a changing modern life." The concluding words of *Response to Modernity* underscore the same point:

> The German Reformers spoke repeatedly of integrating two elements: *Lehre und Leben*, the teaching (Torah) and the life led in the modern world. Individual Reformers and Reform communities have differed—and continue to differ—on the relative weight to be assigned each of these elements. . . . Yet the reestablishment of the scale's fulcrum in every generation, in every individual religious conscience, and in the collective life, has been an enduring characteristic of Reform. Perhaps it is the ongoing and common task of creating ever anew that shifting and delicate balance between Torah and modernity—and of relating the two to each other—that in the broadest sense best defines the Reform movement.

It is precisely here that one wishes Meyer had gone further by directly confronting the question: *can* Jewish tradition and modernity be integrated? Are the two really compatible? Most modern Jews—the ultra-Orthodox being an exception—have taken it for granted that the answer is an emphatic yes. But the evidence is hardly one-sided. Modernity has proved an extremely demanding taskmaster, allowing little room for other loyalties. While many modern Jews talk bravely about maintaining a full Jewish life, they have had great difficulty in sustaining even a partial one. Certainly it is no accident that modern Jewish history is filled with intimations of "crisis": the crisis of belief; the assimilation crisis; the crisis of indifference; the intermarriage crisis; and so forth. Clearly, unless some limit is set to the claims of modernity, Jews appear destined to be swept up into the larger forces of secular society, and in the process to lose their separate group identity.

These reflections are particularly pertinent to a discussion of Reform Judaism, whose embrace of modernity has been especially wholehearted. The Reform movement has kept its promise to be genuinely open to the modern experience—by comparison, Conservatism and Orthodoxy are rather timid affairs. But by the same token it has encountered enormous difficulty in establishing a Jewish center of gravity within the modern context. Thus, Reform's rejection of the binding nature of Jewish ceremonial law has robbed it of a crucial element making for a richly textured and highly particularistic Jewish way of life. Reform's emphasis on personal autonomy, on individual conscience, has left it without a clear-cut authority structure. Reform's unqualified acceptance of the findings of modern critical scholarship has led to the desacralization of the religious realm, to a religious environment lacking in poetry and mystery. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the Reform movement has, in Meyer's own words, "legitimated a reduced role for specifically Jewish activities in the life of individual Jews in order to make room for non-Jewish ones." And all this has come about as a direct "response to modernity."

LOOKING at Reform Judaism today one sees a movement still struggling to find a Jewish anchor in the modern world. To be sure, there are some hopeful signs, and it is these that Meyer chooses to emphasize in the closing section of his book, pointing to a growing traditionalism, to an increased adoption of a survivalist and pro-Israel stance, a quest for quality Jewish education, for religious intensity, and even for religious authority. The question, however, is whether this is sufficient, or whether it is a case of too little, too late.

One who takes the latter view is Meyer's colleague at Hebrew Union College, Jakob J. Petuchowski, himself a leading Reform thinker. Petuchowski has stated bluntly that Reform is in a process of "self-dissolution," that it is going to "vanish from the Jewish scene." The picture he draws is bleak in the extreme:

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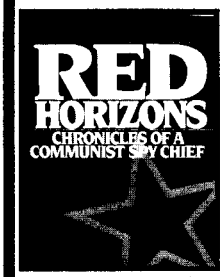

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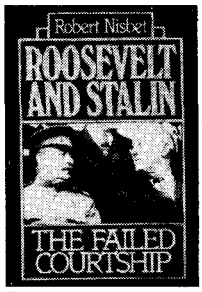

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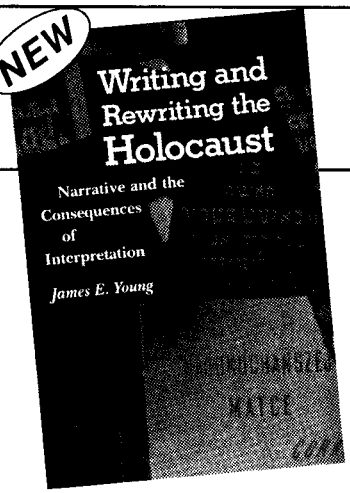

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[I]n the 19th century, Reform divested itself of ritual obligations while affirming Ethical Monotheism as that part of Judaism which really mattered. The theistic component of Ethical Monotheism began to be problematic in the 20th century. . . . As a result, efforts were made to accommodate atheists and agnostics within the ranks of Reform Judaism. What was left of the Reform past consisted of the emphasis on morality and ethics, or what, in Reform Jewish parlance, is usually called "Prophetic Religion." The most recent stage of American Reform Jewish development has seen the onslaught even on biblical morality. What is now championed as "Prophetic Religion" is more likely to be the program of the political Left than something that speaks to us from the pages of Holy Writ.

As between Petuchowski's view and Meyer's, history will have to render the final verdict. But there is much more at stake in that verdict than the fate of one particular denomination. The overwhelming majority of contemporary Jews are unreservedly committed to being modern—no matter what. If Reform cannot provide a successful model for integrating Jewish tradition and modernity, why should we assume that in the long run its competitors will do any better?

Women Behind Bars

"They Always Call Us Ladies": Stories From Prison. By Jean Harris. *Scribner's. 276 pp. $18.95.*

Reviewed by John J. DiIulio, Jr.

In 1981, Jean Harris, a Smith College graduate and former headmistress of the Madeira School in Virginia, was sentenced to fifteen years to life for the murder of Dr. Herman Tarnower, famous for his Scarsdale Diet. Her trial was a media event. Some close observers have argued that her legal defense was needlessly weak and the sentence unduly harsh. New York's governor Mario Cuomo has been peppered with pleas to grant clemency, including one from Russell Leggett, the former State Supreme-Court Justice who presided at the trial.

Mrs. Harris has spent eight years in Bedford Correctional Facility, an overcrowded 733-bed prison for women where most inmates serve three years or less. *"They Always Call Us Ladies"* is her account of life at Bedford, told largely through "stories" about the other women who live and work there. It is also an examination of prison history, penal reform, special issues in women's corrections, and the problems and prospects of America's urban underclass. Last but not least, it is an intensely personal diary, written, as Mrs. Harris confides, to keep from becoming hopelessly depressed in a place that any normal person would find a living hell.

It would be trivially easy to dismiss this book. It contains many snobbish remarks, cheap shots at prison officials, pretensions to mastery of the relevant academic literature (sans footnotes), use of bogus statistics, and other flaws. Nevertheless, it is an important and penetrating work.

To begin with the bad: Mrs. Harris deprecates such prison horrors as sleeping on a lopsided mattress with pillows that must constantly be refluffed; relying on makeshift bookshelves; eating in a dining hall without "ambience and charm"; and having to clean on one's hands and knees like "chambermaids at Copley Plaza." Whenever she does not understand the reason for a prison rule, she concludes that the predominantly working-class administrators and guards who enforce the rules are stupidly authoritarian (rather than overly security-conscious). A correctional officer who cited her for disregarding the rules wrote, "Jean Harris thinks she is better than other people." She responds here by noting that elitist sentiment does not violate the New York penal code; she also proudly recounts how she told the officer off: "I wish I knew the words . . . to express the depth of my contempt for you."

"There's an aura of science fiction about prison," writes Mrs. Harris. "It's real, but it shouldn't be." In fact, Mrs. Harris tried to avoid real contact with her mates, mostly black and poor. If she had not been transferred out of the prison's honor unit for her infractions of the rules, and had officials not rejected her request for earplugs to stifle "the sounds of the corridor," she might never have been forced to acknowledge her prisonmates' existence long enough to concoct tales about them.

With few exceptions, her "stories" of these women's broken homes, battered lives, wretched poverty, chronic welfare dependency, lesbian love affairs, criminal careers, and the rest are superficial. Perhaps to impart an authentic flavor, Mrs. Harris routinely reproduces the Black English dialect and the four-letter-word combinations that make up the grammar and syntax of female felonspeak. Here, for example, is Mrs. Harris's rendition of the "feminist" advice she heard one inmate give another:

> Girl, you gotta think about you when you get outta here. What you want. What make you happy. Gettin' a job you like—not one he like. Wearin' nice clothes. Goin' some place nice to eat—shit—no nigger gonna give you that. He buy ya hamburger and then wanna fuck ya to death.

Though her use of this language device is sometimes successful, the book does more to caricature than to characterize the women who live in Bedford. Meanwhile, Mrs. Harris is ever quick to shift from straightforward narrative to the larger thoughts or noble deeds the "story" in question inspires in her.

There are other problems as well. Despite passing references to the work of serious criminologists like James Q. Wilson, in general Mrs. Harris's understanding of prisons is derived from tracts by radical feminists and others who see America's correctional legacy in terms of sexism, racism, and class warfare, without any traces of enlightened policy or hard-won progress. Every so often she flirts sophomorically with relativism: "I once believed the questions of good and evil were

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childishly simple to solve. . . . Then, I grew up and discovered a world with hundreds of shades of gray."

Finally, though it is generally well-written, this book has been badly edited. The organization is sloppy, there are many redundancies, and digressions beneath notice ramble on forever.

BUT these flaws are most apparent in the first dozen or so chapters. As one lingers over some of the middle and final chapters, it becomes clear that Mrs. Harris has managed to transcend all the problems of the earlier pages. She does so in four ways.

First, she focuses attention on how little is done in prison to civilize inmates. While she champions the need for educational and work opportunities, hers is no muddle-headed plea for "programs" that ignore the attitudinal and behavioral deficiencies of most convicts. Instead, this former headmistress is disgusted by the fact that prison officials fail to keep inmates from aggressive horseplay, make allowances for predatory sexual relations, and do nothing to enforce prohibitions on the use of obscene language. "The antisocial behavior of such women," observes Mrs. Harris, "is endured and encouraged, leaving her [*sic*] all the more unable to adjust when she leaves here, which she will inevitably do." She singles out for praise a lone correctional sergeant, now retired, who cared enough about her charges to make them work hard, study hard, speak respectfully to peers and authorities, and maintain personal hygiene.

Mrs. Harris thus puts her finger on a key failing of contemporary penal administration that most reformers ignore—namely, the abdication by prison officials and their political superiors of responsibility for the moral and intellectual improvement of those in state custody. Whatever else Mrs. Harris may be, she is no predatory street thug, and her descriptions of behavior that prison sociologists might fawn over as colorful examples of "inmate society" or "prisoner subculture" are as unflattering as they are unblinking. She insists that we can manage our prisons more firmly and more humanely, and she is right.

Second, Mrs. Harris zeroes in on two correctional problems that have received little attention even though just about everyone agrees that they are serious and need to be addressed. One is that many people who are mentally ill are being confined in correctional facilities that simply do not have the human and financial resources to treat them. This situation jeopardizes the health and safety of all inmates, and burdens staff members who are trained to cope with criminals, not mental patients. The other has to do with the children of inmates, who are statistically far more likely than even their underclass peers to commit crimes and end up behind bars. Mrs. Harris has worked with these at-risk youngsters in Bedford's Children's Center. She explains their sad lot, and documents their emotional and other problems, with eloquence and compassion. She stresses the need to teach inmate-mothers how to take decent care of their sons and daughters, but she is sobering about how little can be done to save them: "I have watched the metamorphosis of a pretty girl of nine into a sullen hooker at fifteen."

Third, Mrs. Harris punctuates her account with excursions into Bedford's past, offering a fragmented biography of its first superintendent, Katherine Davis. She admires Davis's work as a prison administrator and reformer in an era when high-ranking women corrections officials were even more rare than they are today. While her sketch of Davis's career and penological credo would have benefited from deeper reading and research into the history of New York prisons, the portrait is tantalizing and leaves one hungry for more. Through her first-hand analysis of Bedford's history, Mrs. Harris compensates for the mindless barbs she utters elsewhere in the book about how little progress has been made in corrections.

Fourth, this book tells us something worth knowing about the author. Whatever its shortcomings, it represents the public-spirited work of a thoughtful and civilized former educator living confined among people who are neither. While there are moments where Mrs. Harris exasperates, there are as many where she touches, not least of all in recounting how she sometimes retreats to her room and hugs her knees to escape the violent mayhem, the sexual perversion, the shrieks and screams of the mentally ill, and the other ungodly sights and sounds that are all too common in her prison as in so many others, both male and female.

Inevitably, *"They Always Call Us Ladies"* will figure in the debate about Jean Harris's fate as a prisoner. Mrs. Harris has serious heart problems, and clearly she has suffered over the last eight years. Just as it is unlikely that she poses a threat to society, so it is certain that she could do more good as a sensible prison reformer on the outside than as a lifetime prisoner on the inside. According to Mrs. Harris, Bedford's correctional officers always refer to the inmates as "ladies." It is time to release the lady who wrote this book.

Epitaph

HONG KONG. By JAN MORRIS. *Random House. 359 pp. $19.95.*

Reviewed by WILLIAM MCGURN

IN Hong Kong, the last great outpost of imperial England, a local TV station has taken to running a weekly series charting the crown's embarrassing forty-year retreat from holdings that not long ago covered more than a quarter of the earth. Called "End of Empire," the series opens each week with a touching shot of three lonely soldiers silhouetted against a mountain sunset, lowering the Union Jack to the strains of a slow dirge.

Real life is less kind. With eight or so years remaining before the Hong Kong sun finally sets on the British empire, such trappings as

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remain of Her Majesty's once-proud dominion now seem so many stage effects. Where once the mere sighting of the Royal Navy was enough to make the emperor of China quake in his palace, the British governor of Hong Kong is daily lampooned in the local press in a manner that would be inconceivable to any of his predecessors. Even the word "colony" has been expunged from the official vocabulary. As if to symbolize the shift under way, the new Bank of China building (designed by I.M. Pei) today dominates the island skyline.

Now comes Jan Morris to write the epitaph for what she rightly calls "the busiest, the richest, and the most truly extraordinary of all Chinese cities." Although she coyly hedges her bets on the territory's future once Beijing resumes sovereignty in 1997, Morris, the well-known travel writer and author of *Pax Britannica*, admits that contemplating Hong Kong "is not unlike contemplating the mysteries of death."

What a death it will be. When the British first acquired Hong Kong as a spoil of the First Opium War in 1842, Lord Palmerston dismissed it in a now-infamous phrase as "a barren rock with hardly a house upon it." Today British law and Chinese can-do have transformed that rock into a capitalist dynamo of 5.6 million people, with the busiest port on earth and a per-capita income second in Asia only to Japan's. "There are few places in the world," notes Morris, "where such a large proportion of the population is at least doing what it wants to do."

What these people want to do mostly is to go about their business and retain their ways and customs free from the political tempests that have wrought such damage throughout China's history. It was British Hong Kong that provided the first firm refuge from those storms. Yet if there is one theme that runs throughout Morris's book it is, ironically, how Chinese the place has remained in spite of the legions of British governors, businessmen, and soldiers who have been running it for years. From the first, Morris writes, Hong Kong "was not like other colonies":

> The Chinese were very different from flexible Bengalis, naive Africans, charming Malays, or frankly hostile Pathans. They infiltrated everything with a peculiar air of self-sufficient calculation, and seemed hardly like subjects at all. Several hundred millions of their compatriots lived just across the water, and they had been brought up one and all in the conviction that every Chinese ever born was superior to every foreigner.

No one could deny that the distinct ethos of Hong Kong owes itself to years of British law and British custom; but in many ways the Hong Kong Chinese are, and rightly consider themselves to be, more Chinese than their cousins in Taiwan or on the mainland. (Even today expatriates living in Hong Kong are amused to learn the Chinese word for them: *gwei lo*, or foreign devil.) In part this is because, as Morris is at pains to point out, colonial Hong Kong was "the one corner of China which . . . completely escaped" the convulsions of the nationalist revolution, the Kuomintang campaign against ancient Chinese religions, the Communist takeover, and the Cultural Revolution that destroyed every tradition in its path. But in large part it is because the British—in sharp contrast to the Japanese during their brief rule of the island—allowed the Hong Kong Chinese to retain their customs.

In this sense, Hong Kong's success is a tribute to the universal values upon which Western civilization is founded. The Chinese people have worked like fiends for centuries, but all their sweat and industry benefited only a tiny few until the arrival of Westerners. British administration in particular was tailor-made for the Chinese, as British colonial officials were more or less content to allow everyone to do as before, so long as Her Majesty's sovereignty was acknowledged and the grosser local practices were abolished. The Chinese were in turn content to let the British handle politics so they could devote themselves to things that were important, such as making their fortunes and advancing their families.

It must be conceded that over the years each side did its respective job quite well; laissez-faire is not a dirty word in Hong Kong. Although British governors reserved more powers for themselves than Genghis Khan ever dreamed of, in practice what made Hong Kong work was the traditional disinclination of the British to invoke these vast powers save in times of extreme emergency. By contrast, the Communist leaders of China, whatever else might be said of them, have never showed a reluctance to invoke power—hence the worry about 1997.

The hands-off approach of the British made a number of people very rich and most people reasonably comfortable. Nobody is more Hong Kong, reports Morris, than a rich Chinese woman sitting in the back of her chauffeur-driven Rolls Royce, "all cash and condescension." Indeed, Morris finds that "a sense of satisfied avarice is pervasive nearly everywhere, because almost everybody makes *more* money here: the Chinese taxi driver gets far more than his comrade in Guangzhou, the Australian journalist makes far more than his colleague in Sydney"—and Governor David Wilson has a higher salary than Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. In the Chinese perspective, the average Hong Kong resident makes about twice as much as his cousin in Taiwan and about 27 times as much as his cousins on the mainland.

In the end, however, all Hong Kong's riches have not been able to save it from its fate—a reminder of the priority politics must always take over economics. Although generations of British civil servants have administered the territory brilliantly and without destructive political rancor, their paternalistic competence has left their charges singularly unprepared for the transition to Beijing rule. More importantly, the people in both Beijing and London deciding Hong Kong's

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future are not those who will have to live with it.

Today it is not so much the terms of the Joint Declaration with China concerning the eventual surrender of Hong Kong as the shameful failure of the British to make good on those terms that is responsible for the fatalism surrounding "the overwhelming fact of 1997." No one has ever expected much from China, but what not even the most die-hard foe of the accord could have predicted was the degree to which Margaret Thatcher's Britain would kowtow to the world's largest Communist nation. Elsewhere Morris has quoted Emerson's observation that the virtue of the British empire was that it was "more just than kind"; today, here, it is neither.

In *Hong Kong* Jan Morris does not really delve into why this should be so. What she has done instead is to freeze Hong Kong for a moment in all "its fructifying untidyness, its boisterous lack of privacy, its comforting pandemonium." In so doing she has provided those who have come to love this peculiar little island with a final portrait, and given those who must see it only from their armchairs some idea of the magnitude of what is being lost.

Measuring Intelligence

THE IQ CONTROVERSY: THE MEDIA AND PUBLIC POLICY. By MARK SNYDERMAN and STANLEY ROTHMAN. *Transaction Books. 310 pp. $24.95.*

Reviewed by DANIEL SELIGMAN

NOT many Americans know a great deal about intelligence testing, but strong opinions about it are rampant. The opinons are overwhelmingly negative. Reflexive hostility to IQ tests is the norm among humane and liberal-minded members of the educated classes, which means it is also the preferred wisdom of the American media.

The source of the hostility is fairly obvious. Anyone accepting the validity of IQ tests is instantly in the grasp of an unlovable proposition: people are not equal in mental ability. Worse, groups are not equal in average ability. The rich have more mental ability than the poor. Especially troublesome in an age of affirmative action, blacks and Hispanics score significantly lower than whites on average. Whites in turn score a bit lower than Asian Americans, which also counts as bad news in many precincts. Men and women have the same average scores, but men tend to be somewhat overrepresented at the tails of the distribution curve, meaning that more of them are in the high-talent ranges above, say, IQ 140. (Men are also overrepresented among mental defectives, a fact that does not mollify feminist critics of IQ testing.) An irresistible implication of these data: many of the advantages flowing to the most privileged members of American society may have been legitimately "earned."

If you are committed to egalitarian values, this is exactly what you do not want to hear. So you yearn to believe that IQ data are somehow fraudulent, or that they really have nothing to do with intelligence, or that the group differentials they point up reflect only environmental (and therefore readily changeable) effects. The media work hard at satisfying the demand for these conclusions, and in the process tell us a lot of things about the IQ that are not so.

A major purpose of *The IQ Controversy* is to talk back to the media about intelligence testing. Stanley Rothman, professor of government at Smith College, is also the co-author of *The Media Elite* and thus a combat veteran of media backtalk. Mark Snyderman is a Harvard-trained psychologist now studying law at the University of Chicago. They say their research grew out of a concern "that the views of the relevant expert community are reported inaccurately to the attentive public by the elite media." Snyderman and Rothman are not, of course, the first scholars to express dismay about this reporting. In 1982, Richard Herrnstein complained in the *Atlantic* about his own infuriating experiences with editors and producers determined to misrepresent intelligence testing. *The IQ Controversy* has developed this case much more systematically.

The authors have undertaken several related tasks. They have performed a huge content analysis of media coverage of the IQ controversy during 1969-83. They have also taken an exhaustive survey of "the experts." Along the way, they have produced a moderately technical, moderately readable history of the IQ and a guide to several issues central to the controversy. Their discussion rambles all over the lot, but the book's main thesis is clear enough: the media point of view about intelligence testing is very much at odds with the beliefs of knowledgeable scholars.

The authors' content analysis covers the New York *Times*, the Washington *Post*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the weekly newsmagazines, and the network news programs. Most of the news coverage is scored as "neutral," i.e., nobody was pushing a point of view. But where judgments were offered, certain themes surfaced quite regularly. One staple of media analysis is the "cultural bias" of IQ tests and the possibility that they "are largely a measure of exposure to white middle-class culture." This thought, which implies that the tests are totally fraudulent, was found 24 times in the *Times*, 12 times in the *Post*, 3 times in the *Wall Street Journal*, 15 times in the newsmagazines, and 9 times on the networks. The alternative view—that the most popular tests are basically fair—ran a very distant second.

Another major media preoccupation has to do with the way students are classified after they take IQ tests. A central purpose of the testing is of course to ensure that students work at appropriate levels and get remedial instruction if necessary. But the media seem magnetized by an opposing thought: that students may be misclassified or stigmatized because of their IQ scores. The analysis found 39 articles or broadcasts arguing this proposition and none resisting it. There were also 26 articles arguing

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that tests promote racism or inequality, none opposing this view.

The media have done worst of all with the nature-nurture issue. They have repeatedly argued that differences in IQ mainly or totally reflect environmental factors. Typical were *Time*'s comments after Japanese Prime Minister Nakasone's disparaging remarks in 1986 about the intelligence of American minority-group members. Said the magazine: "Most scholars today believe that so-called intelligence and achievement differences stem largely from environmental factors."

Summarizing what they have learned about media coverage of this issue, Snyderman and Rothman write:

> Journalists have . . . clearly misrepresented the views of the relevant scientific community as to the interaction between genetic and environmental factors in explaining differences in IQ. . . . One would be forced to conclude from reading the newspapers and newsmagazines and watching television that only a few maverick "experts" support the view that genetic variation plays a significant role in individual or group differences, while the vast majority of experts believe that such differences are purely the result of environmental factors.

Scholars who have elaborated the genetic case for a wide audience—the most famous is Arthur Jensen—have not only been characterized as extremists but smeared as racists. The content analysis turned up 17 references to Jensen as a racist. Meanwhile, Leon Kamin of Princeton keeps being cited (in the *Time* article on Nakasone, for example, and in a CBS special report on "The IQ Myth") as a respected authority figure. Kamin, it happens, really *is* an extremist. A Marxist who views the IQ as an instrument of class oppression, he is almost alone among academics in arguing that environmental differences may well explain all IQ variation.

THE book's survey of the experts is a major event. The survey is based on responses from 661 scholars, all members of professional organizations specializing in IQ-related issues, who filled out the questionnaires with varying degrees of completeness. (They had been instructed not to answer questions outside their own areas of expertise.) The tabulated responses are valuable not because experts are always right, which they obviously are not, but because their views give non-experts a baseline difficult to ignore. From now on, it will presumably be much harder, or at least more disgraceful, for the average uninformed anchorman to pass along as received truth the environmental extremism that has always come naturally to him when he gets around to intelligence testing.

Boring in on the nature-nurture issue, Snyderman and Rothman asked the experts to evaluate five different kinds of evidence that have been cited as reasons for believing in some genetic contribution to IQ differences. Of those who responded, 94 percent found one or more of the reasons persuasive. The single most compelling reason, checked by 84 percent of the respondents, was the barrage of studies on identical twins reared apart. Since identical twins are genetically indistinguishable, those who are separated at birth or soon afterward offer a unique opportunity to sort out the relative effects on IQ of heredity and environment. The studies typically show that the IQ's of the separated twins correlate powerfully—far more so than, say, the IQ's of ordinary siblings reared apart. Especially devastating to the extreme environmentalist position are studies contrasting the IQ's of identical twins reared apart and fraternal twins reared together. The fraternal twins have similar environments but are different genetically (only about half their genes are shared); the identical twins have different environments and similar genes. Yet the studies show the IQ's of the separated identical twins to be more powerfully correlated than those of the fraternal twins growing up together.

So there is an overwhelming case for some heritable component in IQ. How strong is the component? The average of the answers supplied by the experts: .596 for the white population, .571 for blacks. Within both groups, in other words, genetic factors are thought to account for almost 60 percent of the variability in IQ. What about the possibility that genetic factors also play a role in explaining the difference *between* blacks and whites (about 15 IQ points on average)? Arthur Jensen has been fiercely attacked, and not very loudly defended, for postulating that a genetic component probably explains part of the gap. It emerges, however, that Jensen has a surprising number of closet supporters among the experts. Snyderman and Rothman report that a plurality (45 percent) of all the experts, and a majority of those who responded to the question, believe that the black-white gap reflects genetic as well as environmental factors. A majority (55 percent) of the experts believe that genetic factors also help to explain socioeconomic differences in IQ.

A POPULAR criticism of IQ tests is that they do not really measure intelligence—that, indeed, the tests have been constructed and administered in the absence of agreement about the nature of intelligence. To some extent, the experts accept this criticism. A 54 percent majority believe that IQ testing still lacks "an adequate theory of intelligence." On the other hand, most of the experts seem to feel they are at least talking about the same kinds of behavior when they invoke the word "intelligence." Asked to list its major constituents, virtually all agreed that these should include an ability to reason abstractly, to solve problems, and to learn. Most also agreed that the mental abilities they deemed crucial to intelligence are pretty well measured by IQ tests. Of the ten abilities checked as important by 60 percent or more of the experts, only two—"adaptation to one's environment" and "creativity"—were held by a majority to be not adequately measured on the tests.

The experts are also inclined (58 percent) to believe that IQ tests measure something that can reasonably be labeled "general intelligence," or *g*. Here again they appear to be mostly siding with Jensen, possibly the profession's

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most vocal advocate of *g*. Those on the other side, who include Kamin and Stephen Jay Gould of Harvard, have argued that *g* is a mirage and that the various skills being tested cannot be meaningfully combined. (Gould, another Marxist who is cited endlessly by the media, has written that "the chimerical nature of *g* is the rotten core of Jensen's edifice.") The case for general intelligence rests heavily on the fact that all those skills being tested are positively correlated: if you score above average on one of them, you are predicted to score above average on any other, implying that some kind of general factor is at work.

SOME of the experts' answers seem surprising. Snyderman and Rothman were evidently startled by the extent to which they allow that IQ tests are biased against blacks. On a scale where 1 represents no significant bias and 4 represents extreme bias, the experts came up with a mean rating of 2.12. That cautious judgment is a long way from the persistent denigration of IQ tests in the media as totally invalidated by cultural bias. Still, the score is perplexing. In an academic environment swarming with researchers who would give an arm to prove test bias, studies persistently fail to find its existence at any significant level. The bottom line on cultural bias is predictive power: if a test does equally well at predicting the academic and job performance of blacks and whites, and if any given score predicts the same outcome for each race, then the test cannot reasonably be viewed as biased. In fact, IQ tests do well at meeting these conditions. Where there is a minor difference in predictive power, it tends to be in *favor* of blacks (i.e., it overpredicts their performance).

So why did the experts nevertheless insist on a certain amount of bias against blacks? Snyderman and Rothman hypothesize, plausibly, that the judgment is at bottom political. On most of the questions the experts tackled, their political perspectives (as revealed in responses to a battery of questions about social values) seem not to have influenced their conclusions. But on several of the most politically sensitive questions, especially those involving group differences, there were measurable differences in the responses of liberal and conservative experts. If I read the authors correctly, they are saying that the liberal experts were somewhat inclined to override all those studies of test validity.

A QUESTION not asked of the experts was whether group differences in IQ should be studied at all. Some highly vocal psychologists and sociologists now argue that they should not be. In some cases, the argument is advanced in a Marxist framework, with the testers cast as agents of a ruling class aiming to keep minorities and the poor in their place; in other instances, the objection seems less ideological, rooted mainly in feelings that publicizing test data is just too painful and insensitive. At its 1986 meeting, the American Psychological Association held a debate on the desirability of studying group IQ differences. One scholar on the panel argued firmly that it is wrong to engage in "research that serves anti-egalitarian purposes" and elaborately compared such studies to "hereditarian research" performed by the Nazis. Cheap shots featuring the Nazis have become a recurring problem for any scholar studying group differences in IQ.

It is hard to write a scenario in which such studies would actually disappear. But it is easy enough to see signs right now of self-censorship among the experts. Snyderman and Rothman point to indications that many are uncomfortable operating outside the restricted world of their professional journals. Many experts also seem to resent the small minority of their colleagues who have ventured outside that world and stirred up controversy in the process. Some of the survey findings in *The IQ Controversy* suggest that Arthur Jensen and Richard Herrnstein are resented on such grounds. Between the distortions of the media and the self-censorship of the experts, it may never be easy to overcome hostility toward intelligence testing.

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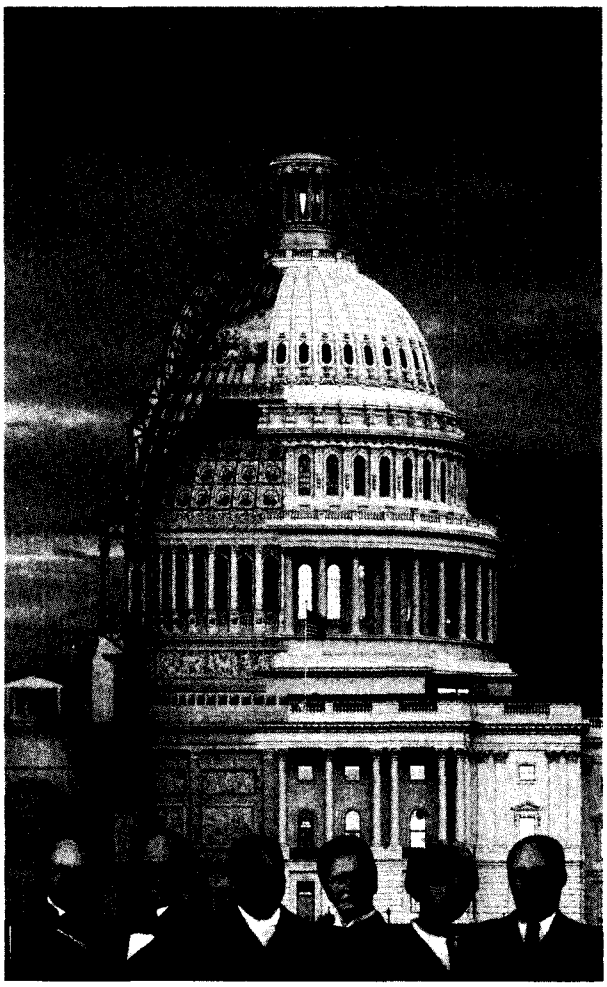

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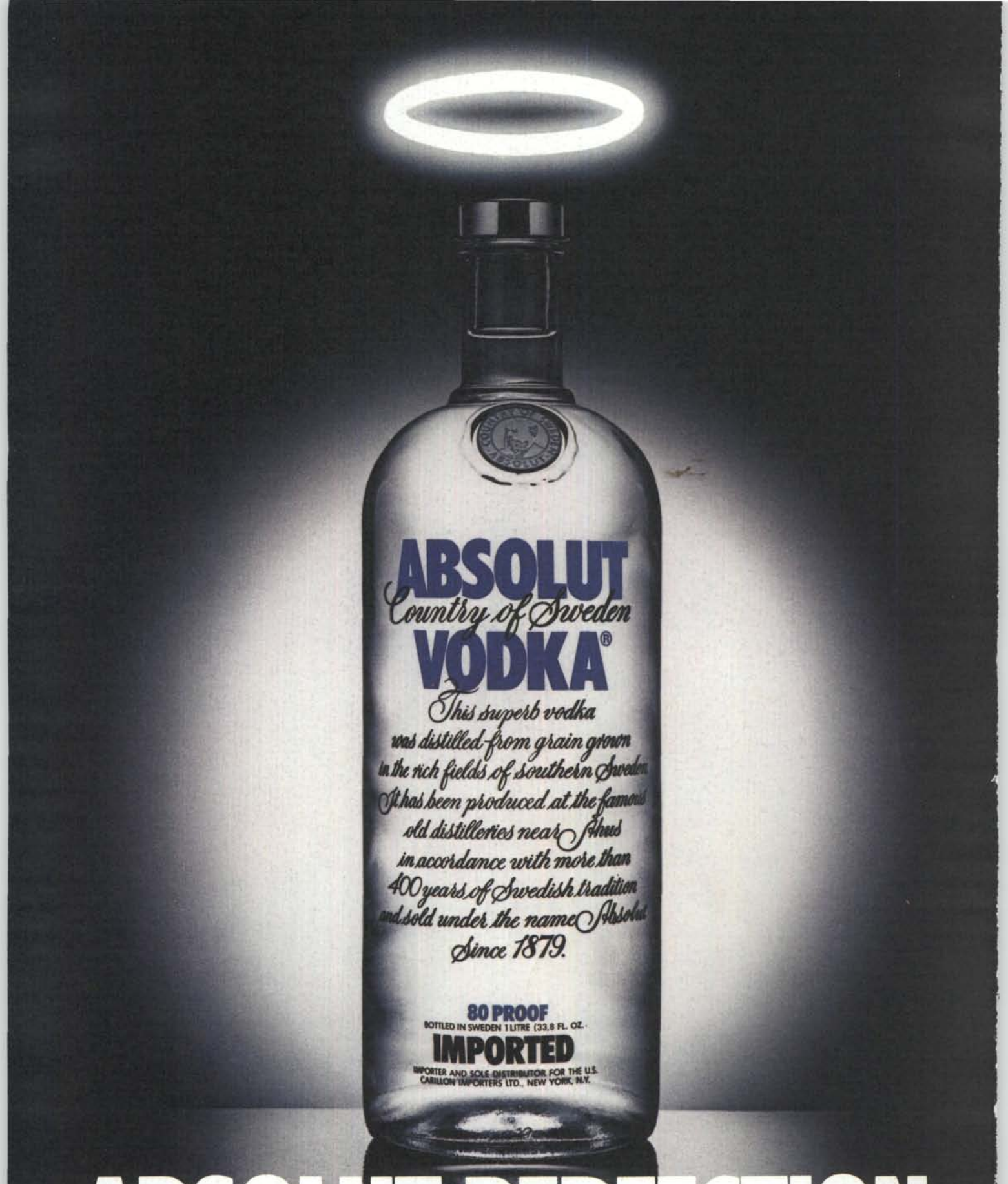
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